DW BULLETIN
THE MONTHLY NEWS 'ZINE
NUMBER 39 OCTOBER 1986

DISASTER~ ONLY 5 MILLION TUNE IN FOR 'TRIAL' 1 & 2 !

DOCTOR WHO'S LONG-TERM PROSPECTS HAVE BEEN DEALT A MASSIVE BLOW WITH THE FIRST AUDIENCE FIGURES RELEASED BY BARB (THE OFFICIAL BRITISH AUDIENCE RESEARCH BUREAU) BEING WAY BELOW THOSE EXPECTED FOR THE NEW PEAK SATURDAY TEA-TIME SLOT.

Only 4·9 million viewers (or 10% of British households) tuned in for the first 2 episodes of Season 23 — some 3 million short of the 8 million minimum anticipated. And once again the directly opposed A-Team on ITV has proved to be DOCTOR WHO's major adversary, attracting an impressive 10 million viewers with each episode.

On an even gloomier note, episode one of any new series is usually regarded as attracting the pinnacle audience of its run (ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN 1 achieving a Season 22 high of 9 million), reflecting the extra viewers who have tuned in out of curiosity, and so with Season 23 advertised as a 1-part story ratings are unlikely to rise above 5 million this season. However, as the nights grow darker — and should there be a dramatic improvement in the quality of the latest series — a reversal of this downward trend could well occur.

With the BBC Director of Programmes — Michael Grade's — eyes very much on the ratings this season, it is clear that the much-publicised 18 month 'rethink period' — imposed as a result of the hiatus — appears to have done far more harm than good for the programme , and subsequently there can now be very little doubt at all that a completely new production team will be appointed for Seaon 24 should the show be given a decent and fair opportunity to prove itself.

Below is a table of comparable programmes broadcast in the same week as THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD part 1:

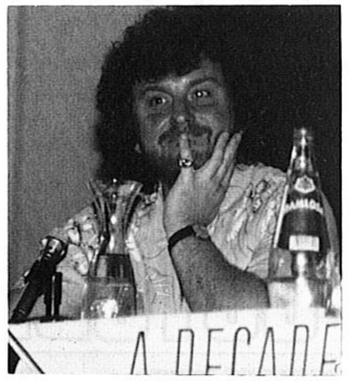
POS	SHOW	RATING	%AGE
1st	EastEnders	17·48	35
18th	The A-Team	9·89	19
24th	Russ Abbott Show	9·41	18
56th	Telly Addicts (Sat, 6·10)	6·54	13
67th	Brookside (Channel 4)	5·55	11
68th	Blue Peter	5·20	10
69th	DOCTOR WHO (episode 1)	4·90	10
72nd	Scooby Doo	4·89	10

(Roland Rat; unplaced, appox 3·5 million)

INSIDE~
COLIN BAKER CANDID INTERVIEW
JN~T AT PANOPTICON VII
KEVIN STONEY ALIVE AND WELL !

NEWS FROM PANOPTICON VII

WHAT JN-T SAID



ALTHOUGH BILLED A LONG TIME IN ADVANCE TO APPEAR AT THE DWAS EVENT 'PANOPTICON VII', EVEN THE ORGANISERS WERE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED—NOT TO MENTION RELIEVED—WHEN JOHN NATHAN-TURNER ARRIVED FOR HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT A BRITISH CONVENTION SINCE LAST NOVEMBER AMID AN ATMOSPHERE OF EXTREME TENSION.

However, undoubtably in respect for JN-T's courageous decision to show his face in front of his most vociferous of critics (i.e; the fans), the subject of Eric Saward's resignation and subsequent revelations failed to rear its head throughout his panel with Colin Baker, Nicola Bryant and Pip and Jane Baker, though no doubt any such question would have been met with the stock reply of "No comment". Inevitably controversial questions were raised at various points and this once very enthusiastic and energetic of convention guests remained subdued and beetroot red throughout, leaving Colin Baker to deflect many of the more probing questions as follows:

Concerning a query about the promised repeats to fill the 18 month gap, JN-T commented: *"I think it was decided by our two Controllers there would be other programmes shown during the summer."* Quizzed about the series' future, he replied: *"The future of DOCTOR WHO is very, very healthy ... Michael Grade has seen the first episode and enjoyed it tremendously. At this moment in time next season looks very, very firm indeed. The shape of the season would be similar to this, in other words 14 episodes."* Asked if he had any ideas for a new script-editor for Season 24, he said: *"No, because I'm unlikely to be producing it. I want to move on to something else, so no, I haven't got any ideas for script-editor so I won't be thinking about it ... I am working on a new project and I very much want to move on,"* and when asked about the possibility of a story in Season 24 to introduce Bonnie Langford (in TRIAL OF A TIME LORD we meet her in the Doctor's future after they first met), he replied: *"I don't want to think about doing anymore,"* and he also commented that he had no idea of the identity of his successor.

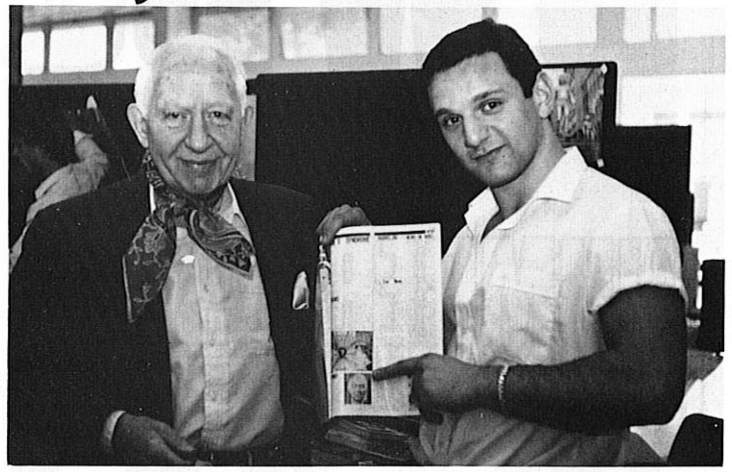
On the subject of the hiatus, he was quizzed about the press claims that the 6th floor had deemed the series "old and tired" and whether he agreed with this accusation. He replied: *"No, I don't. Criticisms of 'old and tired' is an unsubstantiated report in a newspaper. No criticism from the 6th Floor has ever come to me."*

Onto lighter matters, and he passed when asked to comment on the new theme music but admitted that it would have been a wise move to change the titles too but there wasn't enough money.

When asked to confirm the rumours surrounding the repeat of THE CHASE as part of the BBC's 50th Anniversary celebrations, he said, *"I don't know. There is some talk about DOCTOR WHO being included in the BBC's 50th Year package, but at this moment in time there is no information."*

As for whether the series will stay at 14 episodes: *"The show gets reviewed anually. There's no reason to suppose it's stuck at 14—things can change every year,"* and the possibility of a story set in Singapore: *"Bob Holmes was commissioned but we stopped him from writing it. I don't know—ask whoever replaces me !"*

Well, stone the crows !



KEVIN STONEY MADE A SURPRISE APEARANCE AT 'PANOPTICON VII' ON SEPTEMBER 7TH—ALMOST A YEAR TO THE DAY WHEN DWB PRINTED HIS OBITUARY !

Many fans gasped in disbelief when Kevin was introduced to the 700-strong audience at the closing ceremony, after deciding at the last minute for his first ever taste of a DOCTOR WHO convention. With him was the ever-lovely Sheila (INFERNO) Dunn—wife of the greatest DOCTOR WHO director Douglas Camfield who cast Stoney way back in the '60s to appear in 20 episodes in the guise of two of the most impressive super-villains the series has ever seen; Mavic Chen in the epic 12-parter DALEKS' MASTERPLAN and Tobias Vaughn in the 8-part Cyber-epic, THE INVASION.

But no-one was more surprised than Kevin Stoney himself when he read his own obituary (pictured here alongside an embarrassed editor), but thankfully he took the misunderstanding very lightheartedly and was even flattered to have received such a favourable write-up !

The error occurred over an unfortunate mishap when The Times featured an obituary of a 'K.Stoney', and even CT and Marvel assumed it was the same...

Welcome back, Kevin, hopefully for many, many years to come!

SIMPSON SLAMS NEW THEME TUNE

LONG-STANDING DOCTOR WHO INCIDENTAL MUSICIAN DUDLEY SIMPSON HAS GIVEN AN OVERWHELMING THUMBS-DOWN TO THE LATEST RENDITION OF THE THEME TUNE.

Speaking at PanoptiCon VII on a panel alongside sound expert Dick Mills, he put it subtly by saying: *"It seems to go off at a tangent to the original."* He also dropped a bombshell by revealing that Dominic Glynn won permission to rework Ron Grainer's original theme after apparently writing to the production office saying that he could write better incidental music than that being used on the show at the time ! Without ever seeing Grainer's original theme, it was alleged he then proceeded to reproduce Howell's version by ear—IN HIS BEDROOM !

Making no secret of his dislike for JN-T's style of production, Simpson spoke of how his 16 years of continued service to the show came to an abrupt halt—when JN-T told him over lunch that his music would no longer be required, and would be replaced in favour of electronic music — apparently the reason for the change of the theme away from Grainer's original. But, commented Simpson, *"He didn't seem to realise that (the theme) had __always__ been electronic !"*

As far as electronic music is concerned, Dick Mills had this to say: *"You can make a computer produce exactly the same sequence of notes whenever you want. But when guys like Dudley go out there and play their instruments you get something else, something more."*

'Sick' Fan Exposed

AFTER MONTHS OF INTENSE INVESTIGATIONS, DWB HAS AT LAST UNEARTHED THE IDENTITY OF THE WARPED 'FAN' WHO HAS LEFT A TRAIL OF MISERY OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO WITH MALICIOUS PHONE CALLS AND JUNK MAIL.

His victims have tended to be prominent figures in Fandom, although 'ordinary' fans have suffered too at the hands of this cruel individual who delights in making annonymous telephone calls which can only be described here as "perverted", and indeed some people have had to go ex-directory as a result. Many have also been plagued by deliveries of junk mail such as book club memberships where the individual has filled out forms in magazines for these offers with his victims' names and addresses.

Although DWB itself hasn't been affected by this nuisance, in the interests of other fans we hope to put an end to this immature person's activities by threatening to publish his/her name in DWB together with a picture of the culprit featured in a group-shot of fans that appeared in DWB#35, and putting a permanent end to his/her activities by disclosing all information to the police should further disturbances occur.

And to prove we know __his__ identity, we can reveal he is a prominent figure in __West Midlands__ Fandom.

We'll be watching you...

__IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR AMERICAN READERS__: As well as International Money Orders, DWB now accepts PERSONAL CHEQUES, so subscribing to DWB need no longer be a burden ! See opposite for details.

STARBURST REPERCUSSIONS

ERIC SAWARD'S 'REVELATIONS OF A SCRIPT EDITOR' INTERVIEW (FEATURED IN 'STARBURST' #97) IS __STILL__ MAKING HEADLINES IN FLEET STREET AND THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY—SOME TWO MONTHS AFTER IT WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED !

Following The Sun's prominent coverage of Saward's disclosures (see DWB#38)—which centred on John Nathan-Turner's scandalous abuse of his post as Producer of DOCTOR WHO—the London newspaper The Standard and the television industry's own esteemed organ Television Today (a supplement of the entertainment trade paper The Stage) both ran similar stories in September, with the latter using it as their news headline titled 'DR WHO CHIEF ZAPPED BY TV SCRIPT EDITOR'. As well as extracting quotes from the article, both papers also printed the reactions each received after requesting BBC comments. The Standard printed the curt reply that, *"The interview tells you as much about the person who gave it as it does about the people who are mentioned in it,"* whereas the BBC "contemptuously dismissed allegations made by the script editor of DOCTOR WHO" in reply to Television Today. This indicates that the BBC are extremely embarrassed about the whole affair, and although they appear to be standing by their own in public, no doubt they will be holding their own inquest into Saward's revelations.

It is also notable that, apart from the loyal defenders of JN-T who stand to lose a lot should he relinquish his Producer's post, the only major form of criticism over Saward's actions has, rather ironically, come from a DWAS exec. member. In the follow-up issue to their headline piece, Television Today printed this letter from DWAS Merchandising Officer Dominic May:

Doctor Who needs a script cure

SIR, – I read with interest your lead article in the September 11 edition of *Television Today* regarding the criticism of the current Doctor Who producer, John Nathan–Turner, by his former script editor, Eric Saward. I would like to say that I strongly agree with the BBC's reply in *The London Standard* of September 9 when it said "the interview tells you as much about the person who gave it as it does about the people who are mentioned in it". Eric Saward joined Doctor Who as script editor in 1981, a year after Nathan-Turner. Why then, if his working relationship with the producer was so bad, did he stay so long?

As a life-long devotee of the programme, I contend that the major weakness in the show over the last five years has been the lack of well moulded scripts. And whose responsibility is that? The script editor's. I personally believe that if Doctor Who is kept on by the BBC, the departure of Saward can be nothing but good for the production. And I have yet to see a valid reason for cancelling it. The last season averaged a highly respectable 7 million viewers in an unsuitable 5.20 Winter time-slot (a mistake by Michael Grade in his scheduling) and nothing the BBC has subsequently scheduled there has come anywhere near to rivalling it. I do not believe the new series will achieve similar success because less people watch television in the Autumn than the Winter.

Finally, Doctor Who is a unique BBC programme with its incredible international success. Because it is different to any other programme, what it really needs is two producers: one to deal with the production, itself, the other to deal with the promotional aspects (e.g. US conventions). John Nathan-Turner has somehow managed to combine both roles, yet still have time for a lunch hour!

__EDITORIAL COMMENT__

Of course, most of what May has to say is quite pertinent, but again he appears to have failed to grasp what are clear __facts__. Saward clearly states that he was continually hindered from using good writers—and therefore well-moulded scripts—just because: *"...John was very reluctant...he can't manipulate them as easily and readily as someone who needs work..."*. Also, has May taken in to consideration that what well-moulded scripts there were, were mostly ruined at production stage due to poor directing, shoddy acting and pantomime production values? And __whose__ responsibilities were those ?! May also asks why Saward didn't leave sooner, but on the contrary; WHY should someone who has a living to earn feel he has to vacate a lucrative post because of intimidation from a peer ? Instead Saward should be congratulated for having the patience to stick such an unpleasant working atmosphere for so long before finally even he snapped !

america

__*Report by KATHLEEN TOTH*__

This issue I'm hitting the highlights of TimeCon and recent Spirit of Light events to let you know what's been happening on the convention circuit this summer.

TimeCon in San Francisco last July was really more of a Star Trek con, especially from the vantage point of the dealers' room where the ST reps—Takei, Koenig and Doohan—were mostly busy plugging ST IV. Doohan did find time to bitch about how much less they get paid than do "Bill and Leonard". That aside, onto the gossip. Last issue you had the run-down on Ainley setting the record straight. Well, Tom (Baker) was there too and seems to be living a quieter life now. He's bought an 1845 school house in the country and is having it converted into a home. Shortly before leaving the con he surprised the hell out of everyone by saying in passing that he'd gotten married again in April. Nobody here knew anything about it and the British Press seems to have missed it. He did not say whom he had married. Tom also told some tales of making the rounds in Hollywood which again indicated that he had not exactly gotten on well with the powers-that-be in American TV (no surprise !). He is looking forward to the airing of 'Lives and Loves of a She Devil' on the BBC this month and thinks that his part in that is a break-through for him on Brit TV in terms of escaping the shadow of DOCTOR WHO.

Last month he did a series of cons with Colin Baker for Spirit of Light starting in Washington on September 13th and taking in Nashville and Chicago along the way. However, they were never seen on the same panel together, probably due to Tom's preference for being interviewed on his own.

* * *

Louise Jameson attended her first DWFCA tour last June. She has gotten herself an American agent and her pal Stephanie Beacham is trying to get her a role on the popular US soap, The Colbys.

NEWS IN BRIEF

DWAS is experiencing the most rapid turnover of exec. members ever witnessed in the ten year history of the Society. Already out is long-serving Reference Dept organiser David Howe who has been replaced by Julian Knott. The August issue of CT saw the post of Membership Secretary up for grabs following the resignation of Peter Lovelady, and in September's issue Mark Stammers of the Graphics Dept announced he was also calling it a day. Mark Wyman has since been appointed the new Membership Secretary. At PanoptiCon Co-ordinator Tony Jordan revealed he was vacating his position after a brief stint in David Saunder's old post, and Convention Organiser Gordon Roxburgh declared his intention to leave whilst on top with the success of PanoptiCon VII behind him, along with his assistant Paul West. Speculation is rife as to the reasons behing this sudden exodus of exec members and indeed of the shape DWAS will take when all the vacant posts have been filled.

BLACK AND WHITE *DOCTOR WHO stories are unlikely to be further released on video following the poor sales on THE SEEDS OF DEATH tape which were approximately two-thirds those of the colour editions.*

MICHAEL GRADE was apparently quoted recently as saying: "If the production team fouls up this time, we'll get someone else to come into DOCTOR WHO. I would have cancelled it if it wasn't for its household name and status and huge foreign sales." We would be grateful if a reader could confirm the source of this quote.

STOP PRESS

Doctor Who writer Dennis Spooner died late in September from a heart attack. Obituary next issue.

ISSUE 40 OF DWB IS OUT ON NOVEMBER 6TH AND INCLUDES...

COLIN BAKER INTERVIEW PART 2: We conclude our exclusive chat with Colin in which he continues to talk like never before on the more controversial aspects of playing the 6th Doctor.

'MINDWARP': An indepth story review and your views on parts 5-8 of THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD featuring the return of Nabil Shaban as Sil...

WINTER SPECIAL PREVIEW: We lift the lid on the goodies NOT to be missed in this year's best-ever Winter Special...

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DWB #40 (NOVEMBER 1986)-DWB #43 (FEBRUARY 1987)

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EDITORIAL

DWB 39 OCTOBER '86

Welcome to the October issue and by now the season is well underway and from the people I've spoken to there seems to have been a very divided reaction towards the first four episodes. It should be remembered that people are entitled to their own opinions and so please don't be too critical of others' views if they don't necessarily correspond with your own. You will find our review of 'The Mysterious Planet' at the back of this issue together with my own comments which I stress are only personal opinions and are totally unbiased towards the circumstances under which the story was shown. Incidentally, to avoid spoiling the plot details for our American readers, all such references have been omitted.

Our American readers will be pleased to know they can subscribe direct to DWB from now on with personal cheques as well as international money orders, receiving each issue within a week of publication. Details appear on page 4...

This issue is rather biased towards conventions, particularly our report of the marvellous PanoptiCon VII weekend in London last month. Congratulations to DWAS for such a magnificent event and hopefully there will be many more to follow. The next British convention is 'MonsterCon II' in Liverpool and details can be obtained by writing to: MLG Promotions, 48 Western Avenue, SPEKE, Liverpool L24 3UR. Till then (or till next month !) — GARY

This issue...

Cover: DISASTER !

2-3: NEWS — We report on all the latest happenings in the WHO-niverse...

4: COMMENT; We assess the merits and deficienies of the 'big four' summer conventions, plus WHOTOON CLASSICS

5-7: LETTERS

8-10: EVENT; PanoptiCon VII — a photo-feature of Britain's most successful ever convention organised by the DWAS

11-13: INTERVIEW; Colin Baker. Part 1 of a special 2-part interview in which Colin Baker talks like never before on the more controversial aspects associated with playing the sixth incarnation of the Doctor. This issue: the cancellation, his costume, the Eric Saward interview, Fandom, and much more...

14-15: REVIEW; TRIAL OF A TIME LORD (parts 1-4). An intricate look at Robert Holmes' last contribution to DOCTOR WHO, and we ask that all-important question: "Was it up to the standard expected after the 18 month 'rest' period ?", plus a selection of readers' views.

16: TARGET COVERS; THE SENSORITES and THE REIGN OF TERROR

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE: Colin Baker (11-13), Marion Breeze (1,8-10), Steve Broster (2), Tim Collins (11-15), Richard Starkings (4), Kathleen Toth (3), Rod Ulm (4,8-9,11).

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COMMENT

Evaluating the Con's

April '85 — September '86, a period never to be forgotten by devotees of DOCTOR WHO for this was the era of the hiatus. Ironically, it was also a period in which there was more fan activity in Britain (in terms of conventions) than had ever been witnessed in such a relatively short span of time; no less than 15 major events in the space of only 17 months !

Four of these were major events staged over last summer, all within just 7 weeks of each other and each organized by a different body within Fandom. The four were, in no particular order; the FalCon event in Bath on July 19th organised by the charity group Fan-Aid ; CyberCon in Manchester on 16-17th August by the breakaway ex-DWAS convention "specialists" Phoenix; The Leisure Hive (the third) convention organised by a local Swindon organisation of fans at the Wiltshire Hotel on 23-24th August; and finally, the all-important Panopticon VII, the latest DWAS event which returned to South Kensington's Imperial College on September 6-7th. In a bid to find the premier convention organisers of Great Britain for 1986, DWB compiled a questionnaire comprising of the ten qualities we felt most importantly attributed to the success of a convention and asked various attendees who went to each of the events to score each category with a mark out of ten, depending on the merits or deficiencies of each convention under each of the categories. With the results worked out as a percentage for each category, the findings are recorded below;

VENUE / ACCOMMODATION: 1st; Leisure Hive-88%, 2nd; FalCon-74%, 3rd; DWAS-71%

A clear win for Leisure Hive's excellent choice of venue which endorses the fact that fans generally prefer the convenience and comfort of a hotel-setting and also recognises the more specific qualities of The Wiltshire Hotel such as its superior accommodation, spacious conference halls and co-operative staff. The Imperial College with its arguably overall superior convention facilities was let down by the long distance between these and the halls of residence, and second time around Phoenix's UMIST setting met with an unfavourable response from the attendees who were to experience the location's abysmal accommodation facilities for the first time. (Being the only one day event, FalCon was counted solely on its well-liked venue and not accommodation).

PUNCTUALITY / TIMETABLE: 1st; Leisure Hive-72%, 2nd; DWAS-46%, 3rd; FalCon-38%

Again a convincing win for Leisure Hive who adhered fairly rigidly to their well-balanced timetable throughout. In contrast, DWAS chose to relay their scheduling information (via captions on the monitors) only about 30 minutes in advance of each event, and also adding to the criticism was the lack of a full Saturday evening programme for those not attending the cabaret. However, the schedules themselves were exceptionally well-organized which is more than can be said for Phoenix who never seemed certain of exactly what they were showing and when they were supposed to be showing it ! Also, many people voiced their disappointment at being presented with a time-table of guests very much different to the one CyberCon's much hyped advertising had boasted.

GUESTS: 1st; DWAS-97%, 2nd; Leisure Hive-62%, 3rd; Phoenix-59%

With over 30 top names and guest appearances, not to mention the first appearance of JN-T at a British convention since November, how could DWAS fail ? Fan-Aid and Phoenix generated both positive and negative responses with both featuring outstanding guests

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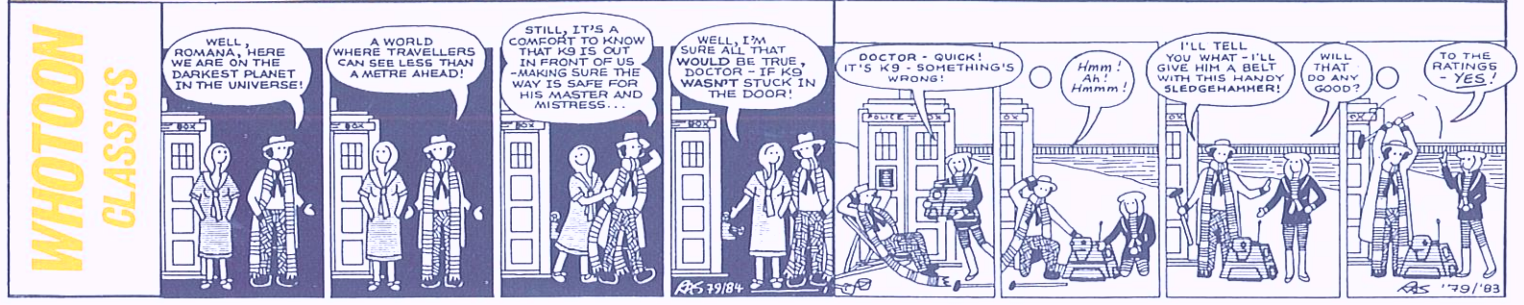
WHOTOON CLASSICS


WELL, ROMANA, HERE WE ARE ON THE DARKEST PLANET IN THE UNIVERSE!
A WORLD WHERE TRAVELLERS CAN SEE LESS THAN A METRE AHEAD!
STILL, IT'S A COMFORT TO KNOW THAT K9 IS OUT IN FRONT OF US -MAKING SURE THE WAY IS SAFE FOR HIS MASTER AND MISTRESS...
WELL, I'M SURE ALL THAT WOULD BE TRUE, DOCTOR - IF K9 WASN'T STUCK IN THE DOOR!
RAS 79/84
DOCTOR - QUICK! IT'S K9 - SOMETHING'S WRONG!
Hmm! Ah! Hmmm!
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT - I'LL GIVE HIM A BELT WITH THIS HANDY SLEDGEHAMMER!
WILL THAT DO ANY GOOD?
TO THE RATINGS - YES!
RAS '79/'83

Letters

D.W.B.,
5 Whitegate Gardens,
Harrow Weald,
Middlesex HA3 6BW.

CONNED AGAIN

NICK COOPER, Leeds, W.YORKS

Your revelation in #38 that a ninety minute compilation repeat of THE CHASE to replace '1984' is on the cards is interesting when one takes into account that it was becoming increasingly obvious (to me at least) that one thing we should have been expecting was vintage DOCTOR WHO as part of the BBC's 60th Anniversary celebrations. One Should take into account exactly what Michael Grade said on the matter: *"DOCTOR WHO will be part..."* of the celebrations.

The first 5 episodes of THE ULTIMATE FOE (or THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD parts 9-13) will be receiving their first transmission throughout November — the time of the Beeb's Anniversary — and well into December. Virtually everyone I have spoken to on the subject naively believed that what Grade meant was some Hartnell / Troughton repeats, NOT the new season !

Once again I believe that the fans have been misled by the BBC. If there had been plans to repeat some vintage DOCTOR WHO I am sure Mr.Grade would have been more pleased to inform us beforehand. Instead he appears to have tricked us into believing an untruth. DOCTOR WHO will indeed be part of the BBC 60th Anniversary celebrations — but as the tail end of TRIAL OF A TIME LORD !

GIVE WHITAKER CREDIT

DALLAS JONES, Sydney, AUSTRALIA

I'd like to add another name to the list of creators of the Daleks (ref: DWB#38) — David Whitaker. He is mentioned in the article but his input in the creation of these creatures I feel has, like Raymond Cusick, been overlooked. But a brief look at his involvement (that which we know of) shows he had more than a passing interest in these creations. He was the script editor at the time and was very much involved with the THE DALEKS script, but how much so will probably never be known. It was he and Verity Lambert who pushed for the story to go ahead, against opposition from Sydney Newman. It has been stated he was very interested in the idea Nation produced and when you look at the quality of the Dalek stories, they were at their best when he was script editor or when he wrote them. In fact his two stories are closer to the original idea for the Daleks than any of Nation's follow-ups. In POWER OF THE DALEKS he did not forget that they were powered by static electricity . He also almost singlehandedly produced all of the written material on the Daleks during the time of 'Dalekmania' (the movie scripts, the play and the comic strips).

All of this points to him having a far greater involvement in the creation of the Daleks than he has been credited with. Nation may have had the original idea, but it is more than likely Whitaker and Cusick took these ideas and produced the creatures which are synonymous with DOCTOR WHO. Of course the idea may not have been Nation's but Coburn's (i.e. his DOCTOR WHO AND THE ROBOTS story) and given to Nation by Whitaker himself...

HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF ?

TREVOR LAMBERT, DONCASTER, S.YORKS

I was interested to see DWB discussing who should really take the credit for the Daleks — Terry Nation or Raymond Cusick. I wonder if you will also consider how history has recently repeated itself. Once again Cusick has contributed the most important and interesting parts to a project, only for the writer to get most of the fame, praise and, probably, money. I am, of course, refering to The Early Years, but whilst Terry Nation's scripts provided an excellent basis for Cusick's creations, I feel he has been badly let down by Jeremy Bentham's material.

Having bought the book and been very disappointed, I was surprised to see that most reviews were very favourable. I think part of this may be a sort of 'King's new clothes' situation. Mr.Bentham is a highly regarded fan writer and the book had such a build-up that it *had* to be good, didn't it ? Maybe people are afraid to knock it for fear of being laughed at by 'the more knowledgeable fan' ? Well, I'm not afraid to say that, apart from Cusick's contributions and some of the interviews, I found the book a very dull read.

For some reason Jeremy chose to use unusually flowery and waffley language in his first book. I usually enjoy and respect everything he writes and I have no doubt he has a great book inside him, but The Early Years isn't it.

I must emphasize that this is all personal opinion, but surely it is only fair that the book should have been credited to 'Jeremy Bentham and Raymond Cusick', or perhaps more to the point 'Raymond Cusick and Jeremy Bentham'...

Changing the subject completely, since the attacks on John Nathan-Turner started I have tried to stand up for him through letters to DWB and letters of encouragement to the man himself. You can imagine my disillusionment, then, on reading the Starburst interview with Eric Saward. It would be easy to dismiss this, and the events of the last couple of months, as a rat leaving a sinking ship and then blaming everything on the captain, but having had a little correspondence with Mr.Saward, he seems to be a very genuine man who would certainly *not* be vindictive just for the sake of it. I would still like to see JN-T given the right of reply before I make my mind up on this matter, but that is unlikely to happen. The Beeb seems to be denying all the allegations, although I am sure they have started their own internal enquiries into the matter.

I am still adamant that the JN-T era has produced some of the best stories ever — but it would seem that this is in spite of JN-T and not because of him !

Last issue we printed letters from two of our readers criticising us over our 'anti-JN-T stance' and we challenged them to read the Starburst interview and to write in again to see if their views had changed...

DWB'S CRITICISMS ACCEPTED

PAUL WINTER, Framfield, EAST SUSSEX

Regarding my letter in #38, I did not see the Saward Starburst interview. No newsagent stocks the magazine where I live. Yes, I am now willing to accept DWB's criticisms of JN-T. However, I still feel your cancellation coverage was over-sensationalised.

One point I would like to make, however, is if you recall film actor Paul Hinely in In At The Deep End a couple of years ago, you will know from his experiences that Oliver Reed may not be a particularly nice person. He's still a good actor though. Also, it is well known that Bill Hartnell could be a miserable, arrogant old sod if he wanted to, but that doesn't mean he wasn't a good Doctor. So just because JN-T doesn't appear to have a particularly nice personality does not make him a poor producer. Whether he is is another matter, but you shouldn't let his personality affect your judgement.

ACCUSATIONS SUPPOSITION AN

PAUL CUNNINGHAM, MANCHE

In reply to your reply to m
again accuse you of being s
stabbing. The Starburst in
Saward does not change this
that your comments on JN-T
off. Eric Saward made his a
a standpoint of knowledge
experience. Your criticism
are merely supposition and
that provides irresponsibly
twisted writing. Eric Sawa
ons can not change that.

P.S.My name is Paul Cunni
recognise the name Philip S
belonging to anyone I know,
me !

Oops ! Apologies to reader
leton for accidentally cred
mistake last issue to Paul
letter.

If Mr.Cunningham's suppos
have based all DWB's JN-T
conjecture were true, then
pretty good guesser !

REMEMBER SAWARD'S F

DEREK DU BERY, Dartford

I feel I must comment on Ga
tter in DWB#38. I've alw
good piece of satire, and I
attempt greatly. But please
my sides are hurting from ac

A final word about Eric S
has left the show and expose
of life under JN-T, it is a
acclaim him as some sort of a
just remember that he has be
ble for some fairly dire sto
THE TWIN DILEMMA, SLIPBACK..
laud his honesty, but remembe

CATCH 22

GRAEME PRITCHARD, CHEST

If Season 23 does turn out
with the public and the BB
it, then they will probabl
another season, and with JN-
ducer which would be really
if the new season turns out
then DOCTOR WHO may be fin
Viewing it like that we can'
can we ?

COLIN BAKER GIVEN THE F

NICHOLAS ROMAIN, MANCHE

I recently purchased a copy
Summer Special — having never
magazine before — and was rathe
For the first time I realise
alone in my anger over the w
is going. I found the magaz
ormative in terms of factual
very interesting in terms o
debate — I am pleased to see
central issue.

As for Colin Baker, my ini
towards him was not at all g
I will confess to not liking
Peter Davison when they firs
and it still isn't. DOCTOR
long history of inspired cas
lead role, and for the first
been let down. However, Col

...continued from previous page

been given the runaround in more ways than one; a pathetic costume; terrible scripts (all of them); poor directing (I hope); having to work with comedians instead of actors; and having to appear on sets which appear unconvincing to the most uncritical eye.

TRIAL: THE BEST SEASON EVER

PAUL KIRKLEY, *Crossgates*, *LEEDS*

Pick up a copy of DWB#19. Got it? Good. Headline: ATTACK HITS 9 MILLION. Joyous news, professional, straight reporting, biased slightly to the success of the show as the above figure was not quite reached. Now, pick up a copy of DWB#38.

The joyous news of Season 24 far outweighs anything about getting a 9 million audience figure, yet the whole article is written in a sort of anti-JN-T mood, with this news going out of the window to make way for a longer, detailed report on episode counts, Grade's dislike of JN-T and the latter's future. This is just one example of the way DWB has rapidly sunk from an interesting and informative 'zine to the absolute gutter press of Fandom. Do you like DOCTOR WHO ? Now, before you jump up and shout yes, let me tell you what DOCTOR WHO is. It's a programme about a man in a telephone box, Colin Baker is the Doctor and Nicola Bryant is Peri. Davison, Baker, Pertwee, Troughton and Hartnell are not the Doctor. Do you like it ? No, I don't think you do. Your fan (cough, splutter, vomit) zine dwells on the past. Nothing Nathan-Turner can do will be as good as the past. Now you have landed youself in a jam. We are well into the best ever season of DOCTOR WHO, TRIAL episode 2 being the best ever moving picture to be shown* and this masterpiece of television is produced by none-other than the talented Mr.Nathan-Turner. He has also managed to choose two of the three best Doctors on the programme, Davison and C.Baker, paralleled only by Troughton's whimsical performance. What on earth is #39 going to find to say about TRIAL(1-4) ? "Well, not very reminiscent of the Pertwee era, was it ?"

Then we have this DWAS / DWB war (petty, childish and fronted by yourself). I think you are jealous because of the standards Neil Hutchings has raised the newsletter. CT is, let's face it, a hell of a lot better than your 'zine. With CT we get the news, not a biased, 16 page long editorial comment. I was, however, very surprised to see CyberCon receive a poor review as they are anti-DWAS. Strange, as CyberCon was one of the best conventions in my humble experience, and that includes Genesis.

I await eagerly the next well set out, visually flawless CT, and will buy DWB to see if the powers that be are guts enough to print this letter.

**Admittedly I found episode 2 moving too – it moved me to tears of embarrassment !*

NEGATIVE EFFECT

NEIL HUNTER, *Vicars Cross*, *CHESTER*

Thanks for the Season 23 reports which only give away a few things, unlike those very revealing pieces of journalism in CT. Undoubtable your concise and uncensored reviews leave CT in the shade, but since we all seem to know so much about the story before transmission it could be having a negative effect.

THE ONLY SOURCE OF WHO NEWS

RICHARD UTTLEY, *Tring*, *HERTS*

I have read DWB since #3 (back in the good ol' days when it could be bought at Forbidden Planet) and have watched the magazine grow and mature. Throughout the bitter slanging match between DWB and DWAS I remained a member to observe both sides of the coin (so to speak). However, since the 'revamped' DWAS and its "let's try to look like DWB" CT, the newsletter supposedly changed for the better. I have found increasingly that the Society is ceasing to do any sort of job that is beneficial to its members and so will not be renewing my membership to DWAS and shall instead continue to read the only source of WHO news worth reading. I would mention its name, but I don't want your head swelling too big do I ?

FANS OF THE WORLD UNITE

SEAN BURKE, *New Jersey*, *U S A*

I found it very insulting to open up #34 and read letters like Ben Keywood's saying how JN-T is undermining DOCTOR WHO and wasting his time by coming to America to promote the show. Now, I'm no fan of JN-T, in fact I'm one of your 89%, but JN-T is undeserving of this criticism as it is his responsibility to promote the show to the American fans as well as the British. I think it's about time Fandom laid down their differences and united. We shouldn't see ourselves as British, American or Australian fans, but as DOCTOR WHO fans united to save our show and not to hurt each other.

I subscribe to DWB through the DWFCA and this led me to think that if you offer DWB to foreign fans, then maybe you should have a regular overseas column, not just a one-off like the Down-Under Special (DWB#32). How about it ?

The first of our American news reports by Kathleen Toth appears this issue.

CRUDE REMARKS

D.KILLINGS, *Illinois*, *U.S.A.*

I would like to say that I am not, nor have I ever been, a JN-T supporter. I feel he has basically driven the series into the ground with his glitzy but generally uninteresting stories (with the very rare exception, that is) and, moreover, by his persistant "pandering" to the whims of the conventionaires and fans on this side of the Atlantic. But I do agree with those fans who have complained about the level of crude remarks directed at JN-T, and quite frankly I've been getting fairly bothered by it. Folks, it's one thing to complain about the guy on his merits for the job he is supposed to be doing, but when those complaints start to turn into snide remarks concerning private nocturnal practises and most probably parantal lineage, then the conversation begins to border on slander, not to mention the bounds of good taste. Complain all you want about the job he has been doing these past six years, but for God's sake there is no need to ridicule the man as a person as such remarks serve no real purpose, and in the end only demean the speaker in the eyes of many.

DON'T CRITICISE JN-T 'THE MAN'

MAT PRINCE, *Banbury*, *OXON*

Like the 89% or ·0001% or whatever the actual percentage is, I think JN-T should leave as soon as possible, but only because I feel he has made all the positive contributions that he can and is running out of steam. It is the prerogative of fans to over-react, of course, but if we continue screeching about JN-T as though he were Peter Sutcliffe or Ian Brady we may, as Mr.Chibnall suggests, do more harm than good.

Personally, I am fairly optimistic, in view of Michael Grade's comments, that the show will continue and that it will do so "under new management" (I'd go along with the suggestion of Michael E. Briant), but it would be unwise to risk losing everything for the sake of continued personal sniping.

We shouldn't criticise Nathan-Turner the man, but Nathan-Turner the Producer – he isn't a criminal or something nasty washed up on the beaches near Sellafield ; he's just someone doing their job as well as they can, even if we're not too impressed with the way he's doing it.

FORGET THE SCRIPT–IT'S THE LOOK THAT COUNTS!

KAREN FLEMING, *Oklahoma*, *U.S.A.*

I found DWB at a convention in San Jose, California, and was very impressed. I got all the issues from #28 through the 1986 Summer Special and it's been mindboggling to cram half a year of news and other information into a week of reading. I appreciate your attitude toward the news and the give and take of opinions in DWB as that's hard to find over here. Hardcore fans I've encountered in the US have tended toward either panic or hiding behind rose-tinted glasses–or each in turn! So finding DWB was like opening a window to some fresh air.

One thing that astonished me in some back issues was the opinion that JN-T's control of DOCTOR WHO had become "slack" as everything I've ever seen has seemed to indicate just the opposite; that JN-T has had a stranglehold on the series ! I am thinking in particular of The Unfolding Text which, despite appearing generally biased in JN-T's favour, hinted that he has been something of a tyrant as Producer.

Perhaps JN-T *has* spent too much time running round to conventions as has been suggested, but I doubt he's relinquished any of his control over the series. I think I'd be happier if he had given control over to someone else and had entirely devoted himself to promoting DOCTOR WHO. The hints I've got of his attitude toward the scripts appall me. When asked about his favourites of the stories he's done what does he mention ? Particularly exciting plots ? Well drawn characters ? NO ! He likes the "look" of his favourites. I've been dismayed when I've read that he lines up directors before he's even commissioned a writer to do the script ! I was astonished when Robert Holmes said in an interview that he would like to do another WHO –but that he couldn't do one till JN-T had decided whether it would be filmed in Singapore ! It sounds as if scripts were the least of JN-T's considerations when planning the series !

I beg to differ with the Philip Hinchcliffe comment (DWB#33) that perhaps the show has become "stale". How can a show which can go anywhere in time and space and use styles ranging from historical to satirical to hard science-fiction to fantasy (and any combination of them) ever run out of fresh ideas to explore ? Add to that the fact that the lead actors also change periodically and one has a premise that can't be bettered and *can't* become stale.

CATCH 22

SCOTT BENHAM, *Clydebank*, *GLASGOW*

If Season 23 is well-received by Fandom it might go to JN-T's head and make him decide to stay for "Just one more season" again. That would be a fate worse than termination for the show...

If not, roll on Season 24 !

DWB CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED: DW Annuals '66 & '68, red talking Dalek (boxed if possible) and Denys Fisher Dalek, Cyberman and Giant Robot. Good condition and rasonable prices please. M.Salter, 22 Heath House Drive, Wombourne, West Midlands WV5 8EZ.

WANTED: Decent stories and a/w and honest articles for a new DW fanzine for late '86 / early '87 publication. Also a good cartoonist / caricaturist needes (please send examples of DW work). Free copy to contributors. Nick Cooper, 28 Dodgson Ave, Leeds LS7 4BL, W.Yorks.

WANTED: Undedicated autographed postcards, photos and plain paper. Details and prices to Stephen Icke, 52 Ulwell Road, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1LN.

WANTED: Contributions for issue 4 of 'Ephemeral'. Anything considered. Free issues for contributors. Stuart Clowes, 51 Ashmead Rd, Burntwood, Nr.Walsall, Staffs WS7 8DG.

WANTED: DWW/M's and most issues of DWB, Target (old covers), & other DW items. Chris Heaney, 57 Forest St., Belleville, New Jersey 07109, USA.

ANY DW FANS living in Cornwall please write to James White, 98 Woodland Way, Torpoint, Cornwall PL11 2DW for info on how to join the Cornish Local Group.

FOR SALE: PYRAMIDS (Beta) £20, B7-Beginning (Beta) £20, Denys Fisher Tardis £20, Armada p/b £10, St.Michaels Dalek Omnibus £10, Annuals 76-84, Dalek 77-78, K9 83 (£4 each), DWW 1-10 £10. Graham Stuart, 22 Lewis Wynd, Bourtree Hill., Irvine, Ayrshire KA11.

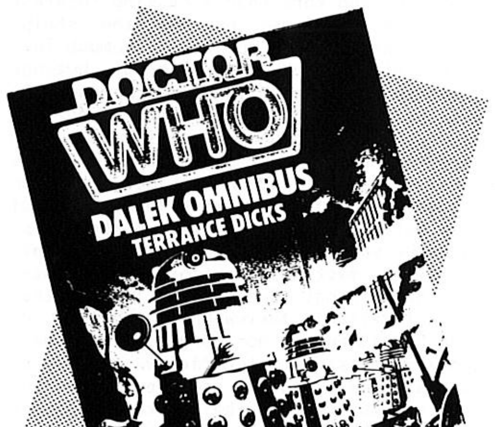
TIM BRIDLEY, could you please contact Stephen Richards on 01-274-7897 anytime day or night.

ON OCTOBER 25th at 11 AM, The Liverpool Time Walk will take place. It is a sponsored walk by DW fans in aid of War on Want and Amnesty International. We need YOU to attend to help raise money and keep DW in the mind of the public. Everybody is welcome from any part of the country. Please, don't be apathetic–come and have a great day out and raise money for charity. Let's prove that Fandom can be bothered !!

The event will start at the Albert Dock complex at 11 AM. Some guests from the show will also be present and we will finish easily in time for that evening's episode! For sponsor form / route map, send an SAE first class to Liverpool Time Walk (D), 8 Kirklake Bank, Formby, Liverpool L37 2YJ.

DWB CLASSIFIEDS: 50p per ad up to a maximum of 40 words. The next column will appear in The Winter Special.
DWB AD RATES: See #36/37, p.32

THE DALEK OMNIBUS



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Back in August 1983, W.H.Allen published a limited run of a compilation of Terrance Dicks novelised Dalek stories, comprising of the three adventures THE DALEK INVASION OF EARTH, THE DAY OF THE DALEKS and PLANET OF THE DALEKS under one lavish hardback cover with a new illustration by Andrew Skilleter. Retailing at £6 95 for 362 reset pages, this book soon became a rarity and is now a valued collectors' item.

DWB has a limited number of this book for sale on a first come first served basis, and what's more the book will set you back at only £4 95 (which includes the cost of postage and packing) – a full £2 off the original price! To secure your copy, please send a crossed cheque / PO (payable to DWB) for £4 95 to: Dalek Omnibus Offer, 5 Whitegate Gardens, HARROW-WEALD, Middx HA3 6BW. Unfortunately this offer is not open to overseas readers.

ZERINZA #33-35
WILLIAM HARTNELL SPECIAL

60 pages, including 51 b/w photos. **FEATURES:** Loose cover which opens out to form a 20 by 16 inch Hartnell photo poster-magazine; 16 pages of the best printed photos yet seen in a fanzine; and after two years of research and preparation, a surprisingly new (old?) view of Hartnell's Doctor. What was the First Doctor **really** like? How did Hartnell make the character come to life? What made the show different? These questions and others, plus recent factual errors about him in the DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE, are all explored. Other contents include: Story Summaries of 'Black Orchid' and 'K9 & Company'; Interview with Mary Tamm; and suggested reforms for the series.
English agent is David Howe, 24 Burlington Rd, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4NY. David also has other issues of ZERINZA in stock, send him a Stamped Self-addressed envelope for details.

TO ORDER ZERINZA 33-35: Cost is only £1.95 (this includes postage), please send crossed cheque or money order made payable to **David Howe**, at the above address.

North America. Usually stocked by "DWIN" 303 Houghton Ave, S. Hamilton, Ontario, L8K 2N4, Canada; and Larry Charet (USA), 1219a Devon Ave, Chicago, Illinois, 60660. Send local stamp when asking about available issues and prices.

BULK ORDERS and for other countries: Write to ZERINZA EDITOR, Antony Howe, P.O. Box 191, Gordon 2072 N.S.W., Australia. Discounts for Bulk orders available, plus back issues (Peter Davison Special). Future issues: **DALEK MASTERPLAN** (reprint of ZERINZA 14-6); **PERTWEE SPECIAL**; the **JNT ERA**; and more. With enquiries enclose International Reply paid Coupon, or Aussie stamps for reply. ZERINZA is Australia's oldest DOCTOR WHO Fanzine. Founded in 1976.

LOGIC GATE 2

TERRY MOLLOY - EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW; WHAT IS JN-T LIKE TO WORK WITH, IS HE A TYRANT OR NOT ? WHAT WAS ALEXEI SAYLE LIKE TO WORK WITH ? AND FIND OUT WHAT PLANS THERE WERE FOR A DAVROS STORY FOR SEASON 23, ONLY IN 'LOGIC GATE'.

ERIC SAWARD - IS HE REALLY THAT BAD ? WAS HE STIFLED BY JN-T ? AND HOW GOOD ARE HIS SO-CALLED "CLASSICS" ? THESE ARE ASSESSED IN AN EXCLUSIVE ARTICLE IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT REVELATIONS BY BRIAN TAYLOR, A LONG-STANDING FAN OF THE SHOW.

LEGEND AND MYTH - NEVILLE WATKIN'S SUPERB ANALYSIS OF THE WILLIAM HARTNELL ERA IS CONCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE ACCOMPANIED WITH SOME EXCELLENT ARTWORK AND EXCLUSIVE PHOTOGRAPHS.

POLITICIANS - DARREN FIELD TAKES A LOOK AT THE VARIOUS TYPES OF POLITICIANS IN THE SHOW'S ERA ALONG WITH BRILLIANT ARTWORK AND PHOTOGRAPHS. SOME OF THE LESSER-KNOWN FACTS OF THESE PECULIAR PEOPLE ARE LOOKED AT.

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PanoptiCon VII

'PANOPTICON VII' at Imperial College in South Kensigton, London, on September 6-7th, organised by DWAS. *Report by ROD ULM*

Saturday, September 6th, and Fandom prepared to take its place as witness, prosecution and jury, both for the trial of DOCTOR WHO (with JN-T in the dock, very much "the accused"), and also for the DWAS with their first major event since summer '85 and with a string of conventions organised by independant groups (Leisure Hive, Fan-Aid and Phoenix) all vying for 'The Convention of the Year' honours.

Of course it was vital to DWAS for PanoptiCon VII to be a success, if only as an act of public relations; after a year of near-constant conflict and controversy, the Society desperately needed a prestigious show-piece to win back some of its critics and to try and fully re-establish itself as a credible and reputable organisation in the eyes of British Fandom.

Previous to the event, all the early signals indicated they may succeed; not only had Fandom borne witness to the rise and equally sudden down-fall of their chief dissenters (in convention terms) in the Phoenix Organisation, but also, by late summer, it did appear as though the DWAS had reorganised itself into a fully coherent body with which it, at least, seemed content with. However, as September approached, the news concerning the sudden departure of at least four of the leading executive members did add credence to the supposition that PanoptiCon VII would receive an unfavourable sentence. . .

The much-publicised venue for the weekend's activities was London's Imperial College which, as an esteemed hall of learning, boasted all the facilities required for a successful DOCTOR WHO convention. The Great Hall alone was proof of this excellent choice in which all the main events were held. As well as seating up to 700 people in the auditorium, above and to each side of the stage are large screens which were used to good effect throughout the weekend for both the transmission of episodes and the simultaneous live projection of events on-stage which were also relayed to various monitors throughout the building to provide a view of the main events for those held up in the dealers room and so on. All credit to Reel-Time Pictures for undertaking this mammoth task with a professional and slick presentation that would even put many of today's DOCTOR WHO directors in the shade !

Saturday started with a brief introductory compilation of the show's opening graphics throughout the years, although the inclusion of the Davison titles before the Tom Baker ones hardly provided the most auspicious of starts ! Ian McLachlan then introduced the opening panel, appropriately based on the Hartnell years and comprising of John Wiles, Dennis Spooner and Paul Erickson. The former two gave a particularly fascinating insight into the early years in their capacities as Producer and script-editor respectively; Wiles spoke of his frustrations at being unable to stretch the programme's format from that established in 1963 whereas Spooner explained that it had been the flexibility of that same format that had endeared him, as a writer, to the show. All three also talked about Sydney Newman and of the 'reign of terror' which he had generated within the BBC with Newman's adage that creativity arose from "chaos" !

The following event was a superb Davison panel, hosted by the man himself and reuniting Davison with Matthew Waterhouse, Sarah Sutton, Janet Fielding, Mark Strickson and Gerald Flood. Throughout this session the team camaraderie that is so often spoken about this era was very much in evidence, especially between Peter, Janet and Mark who ridiculed each other continually, much to the audience's delight ! Indeed, humour was very much the tone of the panel, with stories being told of the famous outtakes (like those concerning *that* boob-tube), Mark's impressions of the Myrka and Tractators and the tale of Janet being 'picked-up' in Amsterdam's red-light district whilst the crew were on a break from filming ARC OF INFINITY. Only once did controversy rear its head; the panel was asked about its opinion of JN-T as Producer and it was, surprisingly perhaps, Strickson that leapt to his support on the grounds that JN-T is not only a very "approachable" Producer but also that he has marketed the show abroad so well (ironically a criticism so often levelled *against* Nathan-Turner).

After lunch, and amid flannings during the finals of The Local Group Quiz final, Michael E. Briant and Christopher Barry took to the stage. Michael particularly continues to surprise me in that however many conventions he attends, he *always* manages to bring along new anecdotes from his time on the show ! Also 'new' at PanoptiCon, however, was his noticeable and newly acquired reticence at commenting about the possibility of him taking over the post of DOCTOR WHO Producer, pausing only to say that he would alter the show drastically, especially in terms of scripts. . .

After a screening of the French documentary (very interesting and revealing. . .if you understand French !), Mark Wyman, again lacking the necessary conviction required of a satisfactory interviewer, hosted the Troughton panel starting with Michael Craze and Victor Pemberton, the latter revealing, for the first time, that the Pescatons LP was co-written by Tom Baker ! This panel was soon enlivened by the arrival of the much-acclaimed scoop billing of Innes Lloyd and Peter Bryant, both of whom were unable to recall the individual titles of their DOCTOR WHO stories and amusingly proceeded to avoid specific questions about them and instead "blamed" each other for the production of the stories in question !! (Unbeknown to the audience, both Innes Lloyd and Victor Pemberton waived their fees, instead donating them to Colin Baker's cot-death charity).

By the time the panel ended, excitement in the audience was visibly mounting, the time being approximately 5 15 p.m.. After the closing titles for Roland Rat, production secretary Kate Esteal and PanoptiCon organiser Gordon Roxburgh took to the stage to perform the countdown for the episode, and so amid the sound of party-poppers and sighs of excitement the opening titles of THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD finally appeared on the screen. The ecstatic atmosphere generated by the packed auditorium of 700 fans in response to the first televised episode of DOCTOR WHO in 18 months really had to be experienced to be appreciated.

At 6 15, once the rapturous applause had died down, a decade old promo film about road safety was shown, featuring a very youthful looking and moustachioed Colin Baker, and this allowed the audience to disperse and prepare for the evening's activities. For those who were prepared to fork out a considerable sum for the cabaret (a disastrous attempt at emulating those professionally done on the other side of the Atlantic), this began with a meal which was, as John Levene put it mildly, abysmal. The 'cabaret' which followed was also something of a disappointment due to the fact that the guests who were scheduled to appear were mainly those who had been forced to withdraw from the convention. Thus it was a small, determined and somewhat drunk company that attempted to appease an expectant audience. First on was John Levene, the perfect MC, who introduced 'Mr & Mrs' featuring the Crazes, the Briants and Kate Esteal and her boyfriend. Although a good sense of fun prevailed, this was a little dull, the audience's boredom matched only by that of the guests !! The rest of the evening included a rendition of Benjamin Brittan (unfortunately demonstrating Matthew's singing is actually worse than his acting !), a tipsy Ian Marter performing his 'Jock Marter' sketch yet again, and Richard Franklin taking the stage by storm in a variety of guises. An auction concluded the evening before those who had rooms to go to finally staggered out at approximately 1 20 a.m.. (For an account of the evening's alternative entertainments, see elsewhere this issue).

Sunday's programme began with THE RESCUE part 1. The audience then welcomed Jon Pertwee, John Levene, Richard Franklin and Terry Walsh onto the stage. It did seem a shame that Nick Courtney couldn't attend to complete this line-up, although it was gratifying to see and hear that the spirit of U.N.I.T. still lives on: not only does Franklin hope to have 'Recall U.N.I.T.' performed in Wimbledon in February, but also Reeltime are preparing to film 'Return to Devil's End' in Aldbourne—the location for the classic Pertwee story THE DAEMONS—starring all of the original regulars.

Time was, by now, a premium, and so after THE RESCUE 2 came a brief interview with Graeme Harper which focussed mainly on his directorial work on REVELATION OF THE DALEKS, and the problems that ensued during the final studio sessions when the cancellation was announced.

Gary Russell then introduced a Target panel with Tony Attwood (who would like to tackle a Nyssa novel now that his idea for a story featuring Adric has been shelved !), Ian Marter (who gave a complete reworking of everything he had said at Swindon), Nigel Robinson (currently in conference with Janet Fielding about her desire to do a Tegan novel) and Andrew Skilleter.

After lunch, there was a rescreening of TRIAL part 1 before the final, and most controversial, panel embarked upon the stage. It took a lot of guts for JN-T to show his face after the recent publicity concerning the production office 'scandals', and indeed many people were sceptical as to whether he would indeed show his face. However, although very subdued and nervous throughout, to his credit he was there accompanied by Colin Baker, Nicola Bryant, Pip Baker and his controversial wife Jane. It was here that JN-T publically confirmed DWB#38's lead story, expressing his wish to at last move on from DOCTOR WHO, despite Jane Baker's very loud and tedious sycophantic protestations which even rendered JN-T himself a beetroot red ! Does the lady not realise he is actually the show's ninth Producer—she would have us believe he was the show's creator (mind you, it is rumoured she possibly has her eyes on the vacant script-editor's post. . .) ! One very noticeable aspect of this session was the way in which Colin Baker was very much in control of the panel, deflecting most of the more controversial questions targetted at JN-T—a far cry from WHOCon in November '84 when JN-T was very much the puppeteer.

All the guests still present took to the stage for the closing ceremony which included three presentations; a Davros figurine for Graeme Harper's award-winning work on REVELATION OF THE DALEKS (the similar award for top fanzine has now mysteriously been axed) ...a cheque to Colin Baker for over £1,500 raised by Fandom in aid of cot-death research and a bouquet to a tearful Nicola Bryant in recognition of her work on the series.

In conclusion, I personally feel PanoptiCon VII was indeed the 'saving grace' it was hoped to be; well-organised, carefully and thoughtfully stage and, above all, FUN ! To my mind at least, and purely on the strength of purpose witnessed at the event, the DWAS may be temporarily (and hopefully permanently) acquitted !!

panopticon
VII
SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 1986
A DECADE OF DWAS
UNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 1986
A DECADE OF DWAS
THE DOCTOR WHO APPRECIATION SOCIETY

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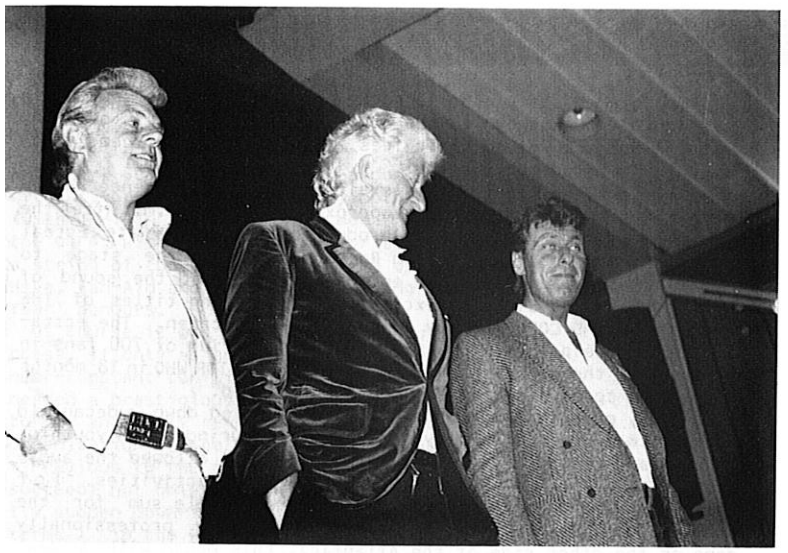
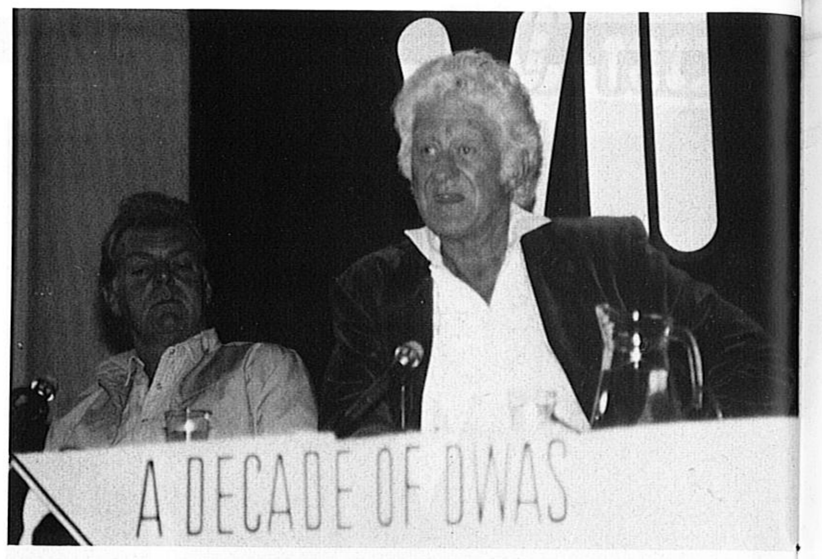
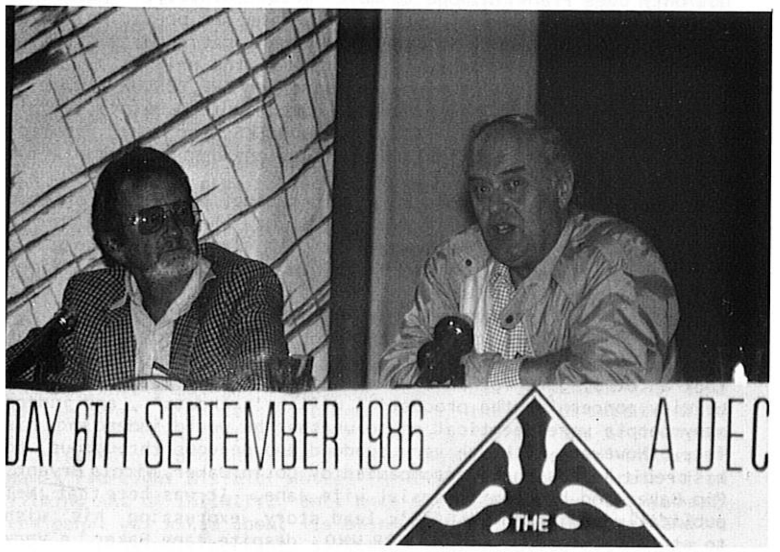
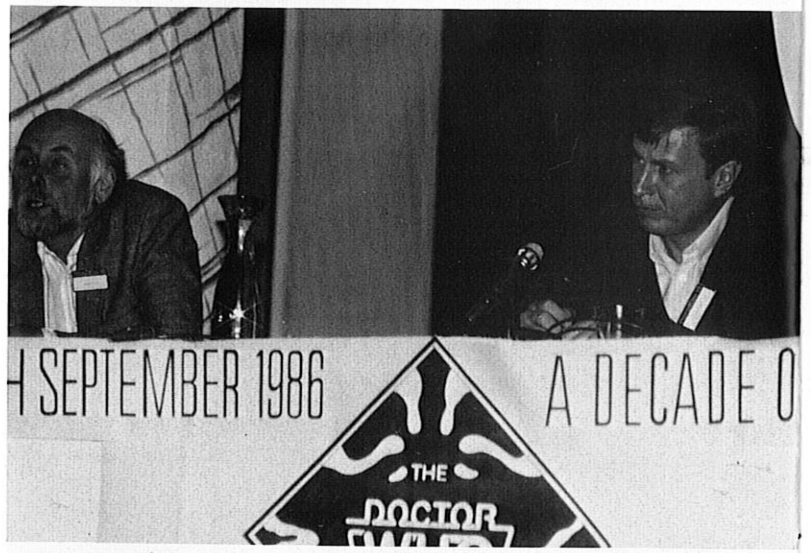




panopticon
VII
SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 1986
A DECADE OF DWAS
THE DOCTOR WHO APPRECIATION SOCIETY





THE DOCTOR WHO APPRECIATION SOCIETY

(Colin Baker at FalCon and Nicola Bryant, Janet Fielding and Nabil Shaban at Phoenix) combined with poorer excuses for 'stars' (the Marvel panel at FalCon and Phoenix's Gary Downie and Adrian Wrigglesford, the latter of whom was strangely demoted to a steward for the DWAS event !). Leisure Hive received some criticism due to the similarity of its guest list to last year's.

__INTERVIEWS__: 1st;Leisure Hive-78%, 2nd;DWAS-67%, 3rd;FalCon-50%
Another success for Leisure Hive who decided to hold open panels between the guests and the audience unless an interviewer was specifically requested. DWAS also selected well which panels could be run smoothly without a host — the Doctor panels working particularly well in this format — and using well-known fan celebs in the others. A couple of substandard interviewers in this team, however, did mar a couple of the panels, but even they would have been an asset to the Phoenix group !

__DEALERS' FACILITIES__: 1st;DWAS-80%, =;Leisure Hive-80%., 3rd; Phoenix-58%
Joint honours for DWAS and Leisure Hive, both providing spacious halls and fair-sized tables. Fan rates were very reasonable but at £8 a table at Leisure Hive this was deemed grossly overpriced. Fal-Con's dealers' facilities were comparable to Harrods at sale time and could really have done with three times the amount of space.

__AUDIO__ / __VISUAL__ __EQUIPMENT__: 1st;DWAS-75%, 2nd;Leisure Hive-50%, 3rd;Phoenix-34%
DWAS' use of the large-screen facilities at Imperial College was first-rate and in stark contrast to Phoenixs' mismanagement of similar equipment at UMIST. Leisure Hive's choice of non - stop videos was by far the most popular, although the video rooms were far too small and claustrophobic.

__CATERING__: 1st;Phoenix-57%, 2nd;DWAS-56%, 3rd;Leisure Hive-25%
University grub is obviously not to everyone's taste, though neither was the Wiltshire's over-priced, undersized and similarly grease-drenched buffets. Ironically Phoenix fared the best with a menu free of chips and burgers and more towards healthier salads and brown bread — in fact so popular was this new direction in convention catering that the food quickly sold out on both days !

__FRIENDLINESS__ __OF__ __STEWARDS__ / __CO-OPERATION__ __ETC.__: 1st;Leisure Hive-66%, 2nd;FalCon-55%, 3rd;DWAS-47%
Compared to the rowdy element that comprised a large proportion of Phoenix's so-called 'stewards', the rest seemed positively angelic (yes, even DWAS' stewards-list which read like a who's who of exec members from yesteryear !).

__VALUE__ __FOR__ __MONEY__: 1st;DWAS-78%, 2nd;FalCon - 75 %, 3rd; Leisure Hive-70%
Despite being the most expensive convention by far, probably on the strength of their awesome guest-list, DWAS' PanoptiCon was still seen as providing the best value. Fortunately for DWAS not everyone attended the £17 dinner / cabaret, and those who did go said, in no uncertain terms, that it was "a rip-off". Obviously DWAS should avoid attempting to emulate this very American idea as it doesn't seem to work on this side of the Atlantic ! Most people felt the £20 asked for Cyber-Con was extortionate whereas FalCon was deemed very good value for money at only £6, with much of that going to charity !

__ENTERTAINMENT__ __VALUE__: 1st;DWAS-80%, 2nd;Leisure Hive-73%, 3rd; FalCon-45%

In conclusion, what the evaluation of these four conventions most clearly indicates is that there now exists a definite need for British convention organisers to pool both their resources and knowledge together to enable joint ventures whereby, for example, two teams could capitalize on the more lucrative talents and abilities of each other, eliminating wasted potential (seen most clearly at Cyber-Con where the most applauded element — apart from the catering — was the guest-list and the least being the quality of the interviewers). There is also a need for more communication between organisers to ensure events are more evenly spread throughout the year to avoid the ridiculous situation which occurred this summer with no less than four big conventions in the space of seven short weeks. Is there any surprise that CyberCon only attracted 100 registrations (in hindsight perhaps not such a bad thing) with most people able to select just one major convention a year ? It also falls on you, the fan, to support theses events which are, afterall, organized by other fans with great effort and no financial reward. Why not make an effort in 1987 to attend at least one event, just to see what great fun they can be. Indeed, most convention-goers enjoy them so much they make a habit of attending as many as possible !

We hope our guide has whetted your appetite and given you some indication of what to expect.

__FINAL__ __OVERALL__ __POSITIONS__: __1st: DWAS' PanoptiCon VII-70%__

2nd: LEISURE HIVE-66%
3rd: Fan-Aid's FALCON-45%
4th: Phoenix's CYBERCON-41%

GUIDE TO CONVENTION PHOTOS

__PREVIOUS__ __PAGE__ (left to right): Sarah Sutton, Peter Davison, Janet Fielding, Mark Strickson and Matthew Waterhouse / Peter Davison / Jon Pertwee and John Levene / Gerald Flood, Sarah Sutton, Matthew Waterhouse, Peter Davison, Janet Fielding and Mark Strickson / John Levene, Terry Walsh, Jon Pertwee and Richard Franklin / Matthew Waterhouse / Sarah Sutton / Mark Strickson.

__OPPOSITE__ __PAGE__ (left to right): Terry Walsh, Jon Pertwee, John Levene / Terry Walsh, Jon Pertwee / Janet Fielding, Sarah Sutton, Mark Strickson, Gerald Flood / Pip Baker, Jane Baker, John Nathan - Turner, Nicola Bryant, Colin Baker / John Wiles, Dennis Spooner / Christopher Barry, Michael E. Briant / Nicola Bryant, Kevin Stoney, John Nathan-Turner, Graeme Harper, Sheila Dunn, Andrew Skilleter, Jane Baker / John Nathan-Turner, Sheila Dunn, Colin Baker (accepting a cheque from David Howe and Tony Jordan on behalf of DWAS), Jane Baker, Pip Baker, John Levene.

__FRONT__ __PAGE__ (left to right) : Nicola Bryant, Kevin Stoney, John Nathan - Turner, Graeme Harper, Colin Baker, Sheila Dunn / Nicola Bryant, Colin Baker.

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COLIN BAKER SPEAKS OUT !

INTERVIEWED WITH TIM COLLINS ON SATURDAY, 23RD AUGUST 1986

GL: HAVE A CHOCOLATE BISCUIT !
If I was somebody else you'd bring a bottle of scotch !
TC: WE CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BRING A BOTTLE OF RED WINE !
I quite like red wine, but I *don't* drink it by the barrel as I've been misquoted as saying !

GL: IN YOUR LAST INTERVIEW WITH DWB (#17 / 18) YOU WERE VERY EXCITED ABOUT SEASON 22 AS WE INTERVIEWED YOU BETWEEN REHEARSALS FOR 'TIMELASH'. A MERE TWO MONTHS LATER WE LEARNED THAT THE SHOW WAS CANCELLED. THAT MUST HAVE COME AS A BIG BLOW ?
It was very disappointing, yes.

TC: DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE REASONING MORE NOW THAN YOU DID BEFORE >

FOR IT BEING AXED ?

I understand what people have said the reasoning is. I'm in a difficult position because I am the person who arguably has the most to lose if the programme is axed. You might find something else to enjoy and write a magazine about that, but not only is the Doctor a part I enjoy playing enormously, but it's also my livelihood. I have a wife and child and a mortgage, so in that respect any kind of dispassionate observation I make of it is bound to be suspect so I am quite careful about what I say. Also, the people who make these decisions are my employers, and I would be foolhardy to openly criticise people who are employing me. But I do understand, for example, that the attitude to violence on television is an area where the BBC has to reflect public taste as there are no absolute standards as to what is violence and what isn't. I happen to believe that the programme we were opposite last year—The A-Team—is a much more violent programme than ours has ever been and indeed it's dishonest violence because it shows people letting off bombs and firing machine guns and yet nobody ever gets hurt ! I think that's much more corrupting than anything DOCTOR WHO has ever been able to offer. I think some of the best DOCTOR WHO stories I have ever seen are the most frightening ones. I thought THE TALONS OF WENG CHIANG was a superb DOCTOR WHO story which I remember vividly as a viewer , and I reviewed a lot of episodes when I was about to play the part and that one came flooding back instantly. The terror that programme invoked was considerable.

GL: ONE OF THE CRITICISMS LEVELLED AT THE VIOLENCE IN SEASON 22 WAS THAT IT WAS GRATUITOUS. IN 'TALONS OF WENG CHIANG', FOR EXAMPLE, THEY WOULD SHOW MONSTERS LURKING IN SHADOWS TYPE HORROR . PERSONALLY, THE KNIFING OF KARA IN 'REVELATION' REPULSED ME.

I think I remember—and it's very difficult to remember exactly what happened during rehearsal—one or two people said, "Isn't this getting a bit iffy ?", and I think both Eric and Graeme—and Graeme Harper is a super director who I respect enormously—wanted it done that way. You must respect people's decisions. Funnily enough, that's not one of the ones I've heard mentioned before; everyone mentions the hanging scene (VENGEANCE ON VAROS) . But you see, when you're actually doing something like that it's very hard (and this is why I am not a television producer or director) to imagine it being seen 'cold', because when we do it we have a lot of fun. We rehearse it, think "Hey great, this is really exciting, I'm about to be hanged !". I can see in retrospect that some people might not like that and in that respect I suppose the violence has been toned down. But I think you could go back over 23 years and find things every bit as violent , but the public attitude towards violence does change and we have to reflect it. On this occasion, maybe we were a little behind the swing of the pendulum.

"JOHN NATHAN-TURNER IS VERY GOOD FOR THE PROGRAMME"

Obviously people always want me to comment on what I thought about the cancellation. Yes, I was disappointed. Yes, I was sad. Do I argue the decision ? No, I don't, because it's not my job to make those decisions, and I've seen enough of the other decisions that Michael Grade has made to realise that Michael Grade is actually a very skilful Director of Programmes. He's very high profile, which is new because 80% of the British public know who runs BBC1, but before him they didn't, and arguably that's very good for the BBC.

In the same way—and I say this quite deliberately knowing what has been going on recently—John Nathan-Turner is very good for the programme. They have a similar style of high personal profile presentation of their package. John, by his presentation of the programme, has done an awful lot for DOCTOR WHO, despite what anyone else may say. I believe he has done an awful lot, in the same way that Grade is doing for BBC1. He is bringing it into direct competition with ITV. Now, we might argue that maybe the BBC should not be considered as direct competition with ITV; maybe we should not worry about viewing figures ; maybe public broadcasting should simply be that—public broadcasting , *without* ratings wars. But while we *do* have ratings wars, I think we need somebody like Michael Grade to run it. If I say that, I cannot then say he was wrong about DOCTOR WHO although personally I may think that he is.

TC: DO YOU THINK HE IS RIGHT NOW TO SAY THAT THE NEW SEASON IS A "VAST IMPROVEMENT" ?

He's seen the first episode to my knowledge . I think the first episode is smashing. I've seen it played back and I was very excited. I watched it with two or three of the actors who were in later episodes and they were all saying , "My God ! You're quids in for your future now !".

GL: WE'VE PREVIEWED THE OPENING SPACE SEQUENCE WHICH IS SUPERB.

It is, isn't it ? I do have to say it is not really DOCTOR WHO. It is, in a sense, more the hi-tech stuff, but a lot of people say that DOCTOR WHO is being made now in 1986 and not 1963 and therefore if that sort of stuff is available it should be used. It's damned expensive though.

GL: WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF THE RECORDING, BUT WE JUST HOPE IT MAINTAINS THE PRECEDENT SET BY THE SPECIAL EFFECTS.

It does, subject to the facts of the budgets on DOCTOR WHO . I don't know the budget and it's not something I am privy to , nor should I be. But I do know that in any television programme a budget is set the first year it is made. The following year you go back and you fight for a 10% increase. DOCTOR WHO — having been on for 23 years—has had a little tiny increase year by year. A new programme like Star Cops will come in with a budget greater to a factor of five and everyone will then say the technique in Star Cops is far better than in DOCTOR WHO. 'Tripods' is a very good example; the money they had available there , and yet I thought it was frankly very disappointing because they spent it on that bloody great Tripod ! If DOCTOR WHO could have that kind of money and the same people who are making it now, it would transform it. All the time they are having to worry about cutting costs; designers being told, "Sorry, we are going to have to scrap that set design, wonderful though it is, because we just can't afford it".

GL: TIM AND I ACTUALLY INTERVIEWED MIKE KELT RECENTLY WHO IS THE LEAD EFFECTS DESIGNER ON 'STAR COPS', AND HE SAYS HE THINKS THE BBC FEELS THAT DOCTOR WHO HAS TICKED OVER NICELY FOR 23 YEARS WITH THE SAME BUDGET ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION, AND THEY DON'T SEE ANY POINT IN SUDDENLY INJECTING MUCH GREATER SUMS OF MONEY.

Yes, and that's standard corporate logic.

GL: GIVEN THAT THE HIATUS WAS IMPOSED AS A REST PERIOD TO "REVITALIZE" THE SERIES, HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY DRASTIC CHANGES AS A RESULT ?

Well, you see, I wouldn't. The process of working is the same for any television programme. You get a script, you rehearse it, you go into the studio with it. The cameras look exactly the same, the rehearsal rooms look exactly the same, and any script is different anyway because it's a new script. So the kind of work you're talking about goes on before I get the script.

I thought the scripts were excellent when I got them, but then last year I thought the scripts were largely excellent then. There were one or two which were not quite so exciting, but I had nothing to judge them against then. I am not particularly good at lifting a script off the page. If it excites me as I read it as a story that's one thing. Other scripts don't read very well . It's quite hard to tell.

TC: DID JN-T OR ANYONE IN THE BBC HIERARCHY INSTRUCT YOU TO ALTER YOUR PORTRAYAL IN ANY WAY ?

They wouldn't. I am playing the sixth Doctor. If they'd wanted a change in portrayal, presumably they would have cast someone else.

GL: WERE YOU BRIEFED WHEN YOU WERE ASKED TO PLAY THE PART, OR WAS IT TOTALLY YOURSELF ?

When I first met John (when he was thinking of casting me) we had several meetings where I said how I would play it. He made it clear that having seen me in an informal situation, he thought I had a kind of largeness of personal quality which he thought would be suitable for the part. In addition, what else would I consider that I would like to bring to the part ? And I told him. I looked over some tapes and thought about it. I didn't want to restrict myself in advance. I did say straight away I think I'm very right for it, and I know I'll enjoy doing it and I think I can bring a lot to it. I mentioned a few things which would be too boring to go into in detail. Since the hiatus, no-one has said to me, "I want you to do this, that or the other that's different", but I've never believed that to be the nature of the brief.

"I WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE THE COSTUME"

GL: DO YOU AGREE THAT PERHAPS YOUR COSTUME IS TOO BRIGHT AND SWAMPS THE SIXTH DOCTOR'S CHARACTER ?

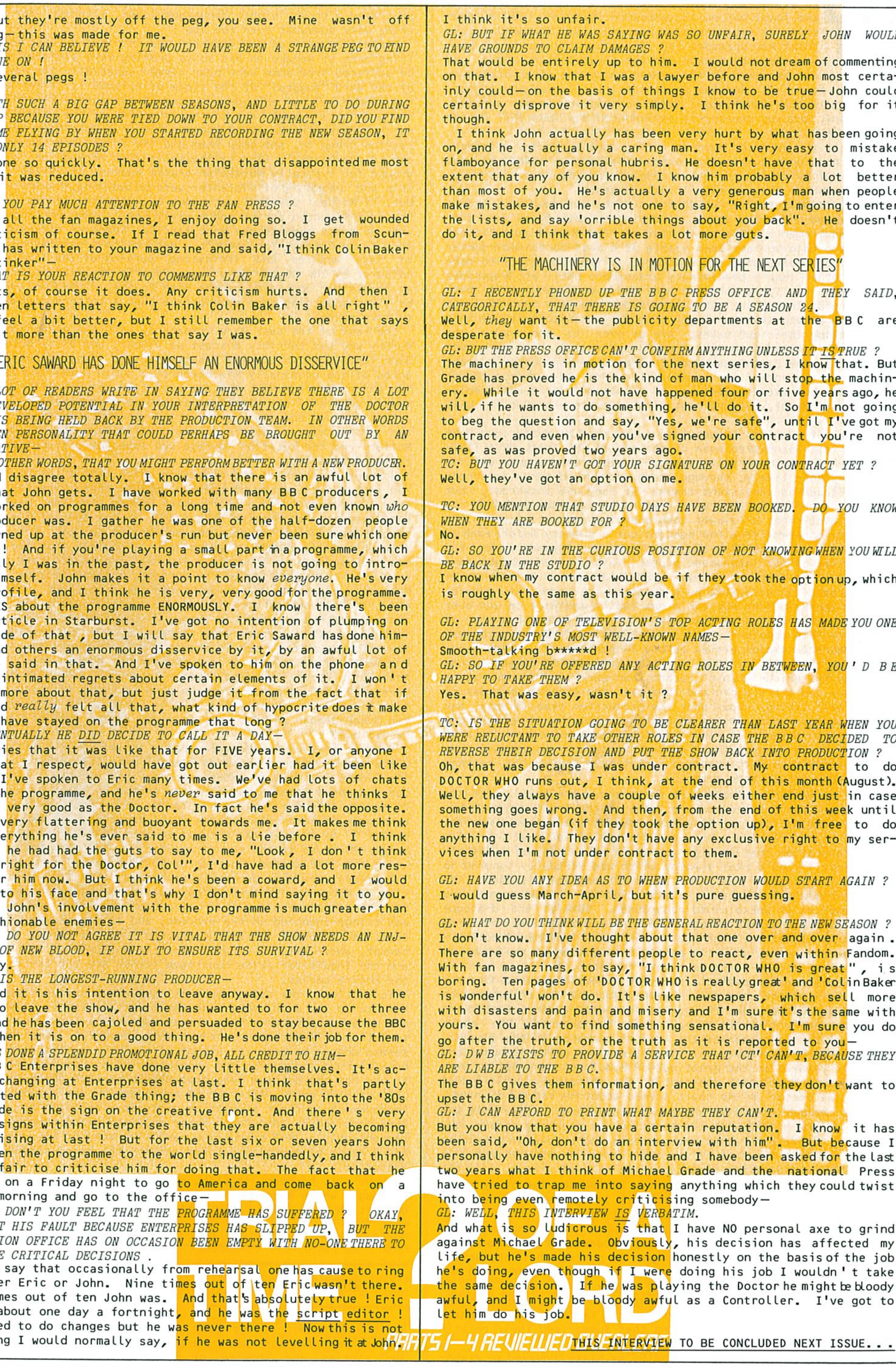
An area in which I am prepared to accept not criticism, but discussion, is the costume. If there was a small area where John and I would not see 100% eye to eye about, it would be the costume. The only ideas I had initially were to be clad entirely in black, but 'Ant' does that, and does it very well. I thought a sort of black, austere costume and this flamboyant character would be interesting but I can see that's not very eye-catching. And also, when you've got a lot of tunnels and corridors, you need something that singles out your leading character from the gloom around him. I think it's quite nice to have your villain lurking in the shadows in black, but not your leading character. I think, in that respect, the costume works very well.

But I must confess I've got bored with it now and I would like to change the costume.

TC: THERE IS THE POTENTIAL FOR A CHANGE—PREVIOUS DOCTORS HAVE NOT WORN EXACTLY THE SAME COSTUME THROUGHOUT.

Yes, it comes down to the budget because a costume like that took a lot of money to make. There is a costume budget for the series and if they have to buy me a new costume out of it, it makes a bloody huge dent in it.

TC: BUT THEY'VE CERTAINLY IMPROVED NICOLA'S COSTUMES THIS SEASON OVER THE LAST SEASON.



Yes, but they're mostly off the peg, you see. Mine wasn't off the peg—this was made for me.

TC: THIS I CAN BELIEVE ! IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A STRANGE PEG TO FIND THAT ONE ON !

Yes, several pegs !

GL: WITH SUCH A BIG GAP BETWEEN SEASONS, AND LITTLE TO DO DURING THE GAP BECAUSE YOU WERE TIED DOWN TO YOUR CONTRACT, DID YOU FIND THE TIME FLYING BY WHEN YOU STARTED RECORDING THE NEW SEASON, IT BEING ONLY 14 EPISODES ?

It's gone so quickly. That's the thing that disappointed me most —that it was reduced.

GL: DO YOU PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THE FAN PRESS ?

I read all the fan magazines, I enjoy doing so. I get wounded by criticism of course. If I read that Fred Bloggs from Scunthorpe has written to your magazine and said, "I think Colin Baker is a stinker"—

GL: WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO COMMENTS LIKE THAT ?

It hurts, of course it does. Any criticism hurts. And then I read ten letters that say, "I think Colin Baker is all right" , and I feel a bit better, but I still remember the one that says I wasn't more than the ones that say I was.

"ERIC SAWARD HAS DONE HIMSELF AN ENORMOUS DISSERVICE"

GL: A LOT OF READERS WRITE IN SAYING THEY BELIEVE THERE IS A LOT OF UNDEVELOPED POTENTIAL IN YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE DOCTOR WHICH IS BEING HELD BACK BY THE PRODUCTION TEAM. IN OTHER WORDS A HIDDEN PERSONALITY THAT COULD PERHAPS BE BROUGHT OUT BY AN ALTERNATIVE—

TC: IN OTHER WORDS, THAT YOU MIGHT PERFORM BETTER WITH A NEW PRODUCER.

I would disagree totally. I know that there is an awful lot of flak that John gets. I have worked with many BBC producers , I have worked on programmes for a long time and not even known *who* the producer was. I gather he was one of the half-dozen people who turned up at the producer's run but never been sure which one it was ! And if you're playing a small part in a programme, which obviously I was in the past, the producer is not going to introduce himself. John makes it a point to know *everyone*. He's very high profile, and I think he is very, very good for the programme. He CARES about the programme ENORMOUSLY. I know there's been that article in Starburst. I've got no intention of plumping on each side of that , but I will say that Eric Saward has done himself and others an enormous disservice by it, by an awful lot of what he said in that. And I've spoken to him on the phone and he has intimated regrets about certain elements of it. I won't say anymore about that, but just judge it from the fact that if Eric had *really* felt all that, what kind of hypocrite does it make him to have stayed on the programme that long ?

GL: EVENTUALLY HE DID DECIDE TO CALL IT A DAY—

He implies that it was like that for FIVE years. I, or anyone I know that I respect, would have got out earlier had it been like that. I've spoken to Eric many times. We've had lots of chats about the programme, and he's *never* said to me that he thinks I was not very good as the Doctor. In fact he's said the opposite. He was very flattering and buoyant towards me. It makes me think that everything he's ever said to me is a lie before . I think that if he had had the guts to say to me, "Look , I don't think you're right for the Doctor, Col'", I'd have had a lot more respect for him now. But I think he's been a coward, and I would say it to his face and that's why I don't mind saying it to you. I think John's involvement with the programme is much greater than his fashionable enemies—

GL: BUT DO YOU NOT AGREE IT IS VITAL THAT THE SHOW NEEDS AN INJECTION OF NEW BLOOD, IF ONLY TO ENSURE ITS SURVIVAL ?

Possibly.

TC: HE IS THE LONGEST-RUNNING PRODUCER—

Yes, and it is his intention to leave anyway. I know that he wants to leave the show, and he has wanted to for two or three years and he has been cajoled and persuaded to stay because the BBC knows when it is on to a good thing. He's done their job for them.

GL: HE'S DONE A SPLENDID PROMOTIONAL JOB, ALL CREDIT TO HIM—

Yes, BBC Enterprises have done very little themselves. It's actually changing at Enterprises at last. I think that's partly associated with the Grade thing; the BBC is moving into the '80s and Grade is the sign on the creative front. And there's very strong signs within Enterprises that they are actually becoming enterprising at last ! But for the last six or seven years John has taken the programme to the world single-handedly, and I think it's unfair to criticise him for doing that. The fact that he chooses on a Friday night to go to America and come back on a Monday morning and go to the office—

GL: BUT DON'T YOU FEEL THAT THE PROGRAMME HAS SUFFERED ? OKAY, IT'S NOT HIS FAULT BECAUSE ENTERPRISES HAS SLIPPED UP, BUT THE PRODUCTION OFFICE HAS ON OCCASION BEEN EMPTY WITH NO-ONE THERE TO MAKE THE CRITICAL DECISIONS .

I would say that occasionally from rehearsal one has cause to ring up either Eric or John. Nine times out of ten Eric wasn't there. Nine times out of ten John was. And that's absolutely true ! Eric was in about one day a fortnight, and he was the script editor ! We wanted to do changes but he was never there ! Now this is not something I would normally say, if he was not levelling it at John. I think it's so unfair.

GL: BUT IF WHAT HE WAS SAYING WAS SO UNFAIR, SURELY JOHN WOULD HAVE GROUNDS TO CLAIM DAMAGES ?

That would be entirely up to him. I would not dream of commenting on that. I know that I was a lawyer before and John most certainly could—on the basis of things I know to be true—John could certainly disprove it very simply. I think he's too big for it though.

I think John actually has been very hurt by what has been going on, and he is actually a caring man. It's very easy to mistake flamboyance for personal hubris. He doesn't have that to the extent that any of you know. I know him probably a lot better than most of you. He's actually a very generous man when people make mistakes, and he's not one to say, "Right, I'm going to enter the lists, and say 'orrible things about you back". He doesn't do it, and I think that takes a lot more guts.

"THE MACHINERY IS IN MOTION FOR THE NEXT SERIES"

GL: I RECENTLY PHONED UP THE BBC PRESS OFFICE AND THEY SAID, CATEGORICALLY, THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE A SEASON 24.

Well, *they* want it—the publicity departments at the BBC are desperate for it.

GL: BUT THE PRESS OFFICE CAN'T CONFIRM ANYTHING UNLESS IT IS TRUE ?

The machinery is in motion for the next series, I know that. But Grade has proved he is the kind of man who will stop the machinery. While it would not have happened four or five years ago, he will, if he wants to do something, he'll do it. So I'm not going to beg the question and say, "Yes, we're safe", until I've got my contract, and even when you've signed your contract you're not safe, as was proved two years ago.

TC: BUT YOU HAVEN'T GOT YOUR SIGNATURE ON YOUR CONTRACT YET ?

Well, they've got an option on me.

TC: YOU MENTION THAT STUDIO DAYS HAVE BEEN BOOKED. DO YOU KNOW WHEN THEY ARE BOOKED FOR ?

No.

GL: SO YOU'RE IN THE CURIOUS POSITION OF NOT KNOWING WHEN YOU WILL BE BACK IN THE STUDIO ?

I know when my contract would be if they took the option up, which is roughly the same as this year.

GL: PLAYING ONE OF TELEVISION'S TOP ACTING ROLES HAS MADE YOU ONE OF THE INDUSTRY'S MOST WELL-KNOWN NAMES—

Smooth-talking b*****d !

GL: SO IF YOU'RE OFFERED ANY ACTING ROLES IN BETWEEN, YOU'D BE HAPPY TO TAKE THEM ?

Yes. That was easy, wasn't it ?

TC: IS THE SITUATION GOING TO BE CLEARER THAN LAST YEAR WHEN YOU WERE RELUCTANT TO TAKE OTHER ROLES IN CASE THE BBC DECIDED TO REVERSE THEIR DECISION AND PUT THE SHOW BACK INTO PRODUCTION ?

Oh, that was because I was under contract. My contract to do DOCTOR WHO runs out, I think, at the end of this month (August). Well, they always have a couple of weeks either end just in case something goes wrong. And then, from the end of this week until the new one began (if they took the option up), I'm free to do anything I like. They don't have any exclusive right to my services when I'm not under contract to them.

GL: HAVE YOU ANY IDEA AS TO WHEN PRODUCTION WOULD START AGAIN ?

I would guess March-April, but it's pure guessing.

GL: WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE GENERAL REACTION TO THE NEW SEASON ?

I don't know. I've thought about that one over and over again . There are so many different people to react, even within Fandom. With fan magazines, to say, "I think DOCTOR WHO is great" , is boring. Ten pages of 'DOCTOR WHO is really great' and 'Colin Baker is wonderful' won't do. It's like newspapers, which sell more with disasters and pain and misery and I'm sure it's the same with yours. You want to find something sensational. I'm sure you do go after the truth, or the truth as it is reported to you—

GL: DWB EXISTS TO PROVIDE A SERVICE THAT 'CT' CAN'T, BECAUSE THEY ARE LIABLE TO THE BBC.

The BBC gives them information, and therefore they don't want to upset the BBC.

GL: I CAN AFFORD TO PRINT WHAT MAYBE THEY CAN'T.

But you know that you have a certain reputation. I know it has been said, "Oh, don't do an interview with him" . But because I personally have nothing to hide and I have been asked for the last two years what I think of Michael Grade and the national Press have tried to trap me into saying anything which they could twist into being even remotely criticising somebody—

GL: WELL, THIS INTERVIEW IS VERBATIM.

And what is so ludicrous is that I have NO personal axe to grind against Michael Grade. Obviously, his decision has affected my life, but he's made his decision honestly on the basis of the job he's doing, even though if I were doing his job I wouldn't take the same decision. If he was playing the Doctor he might be bloody awful, and I might be bloody awful as a Controller. I've got to let him do his job.

THIS INTERVIEW TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE. . .

'THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET' aroused more hopes, expectations and fears before transmission than any other four episodes in the entire history of DOCTOR WHO ; the first new episodes for 18 months; the start of both the shortest season and the longest story ever; and likely to prove decisive in the career prospects of a bickering production team. It also had to satisfy a triple audience of fans, Jo and Jean Public and Michael Grade to help ensure the survival of the show, and, of course, it represented the last full Robert Holmes story.

Given all the exterior burdens riding upon these four episodes, it is perhaps unfortunate that extra strains were added to the story itself by trying to tell a complete adventure on Ravolox, AND to introduce the overall 'Trial' concept.

Bob Holmes delivered a delightful script, but clearly it sometimes creaked under the strain of trying to satisfy so many different requirements. The basic plot of 'The Mysterious Planet' was far too thin to have been viable as a self-contained 4-parter without the Trial scenes and of course it isn't possible to make anything other than a preliminary assessment until all 14 episodes have aired. Yet I fear that so many loose ends were left both during and at the end of these 4 episodes that the last 10 parts can hardly be expected to answer them all satisfactorily while still telling their own tales. Are we ever to know who the 'Sleepers' from Andromeda are (possibly Wirrn) ? Will we ever find out how the Earth was moved ? Hopefully Tony Selby's reappearance at the end of the season will serve to wrap-up these loose ends, but even so fans may be prepared to wait until episode 14 to find out, but the most vital viewers—the Public—will not !

However, if even basic questions posed in 'The Mysterious Planet' are left unanswered even at the end of THE TRIAL OF A TIMELORD, then Bob Holmes' final script—whether through poor writing by him or, more likely, through shoddy script-editing—is irredeemably flawed as consistent drama. If they are answered , but only much later, then the overall umbrella concept will fail on another level—that of viewer comprehension and satisfaction. It is already apparent from the need to put a summary before each of the episodes that the 23rd Season will become legendary for the complexities of its interwoven plots. This will undoubtably be a triumph for the fans and perhaps a breakthrough in British television drama. It will also be a disaster in terms of general audience appreciation; HOW can a new family audience be won over from the action-packed simplicities of The A-Team with a plot of such incredible complexity and sophistication ? The very concept of the umbrella season billed as one 14-part story —which means that viewers will not tune in to 'Mindwarp' seeing it as episode 5 of 'The Mysterious Planet' rather than part 1 of a new story where they can start again and thus skip the other 3 episodes if not to their liking—shows that the production team simply has NOT learnt its lesson in the 18 month gap and that the programmes are still being made for the vocal (and tiny) minority who will doubtless watch every episode several times over on video in order to unravel its multi-faceted narrative. Sadly, the ratings have already proved this point. . .

The basic outlines of the plot on Ravalox were solid, with the conflict between Drathro and the Tribe of the Free exarcebated by the intervention first of Glitz and then of the Doctor. Potential was lost however by the overlayering of the Trial plot to play up the revelation that Ravalox was Earth—the original cliffhanger to part 1—and a plot element which was virtually ignored in subsequent episodes. The Trial scenes themselves displaced a lot of the explanatory scenes on Ravalox, and left the audience to view long sequences of unexplained runarounds. Some of the dialogue in the courtroom segments suggested a strong Sawardian influence — certainly not of the high quality expected from Robert Holmes — and these bits were, with the possible exception of the 'dual' in part 4, so whimsical as to be almost farcical.

There were some wonderfully familiar Holmesian touches throughout the bulk of the episodes, however, such as the archetypal duo of Glitz and Dibber, and the script succeeded to an extent in introducing the 'wit' which Michael Grade had ordered: The comic touches of Peri's horror at the idea of husbands in the plural , Glitz and Dibber's debate on philatelists and philanthropists and Balazar's remarks on the great author H.M.Stationary Office were marvellous, and in stark contrast to the childishly facile 'puns' made by the Doctor in the court scenes about the Valeyard's name .

Holmes demonstrated with his final story that, unlike some WHO writers, he was gifted with the technique of creating strong, independant characters rather than cyphers and succeed in balancing tension and humour. Katryca was that rarity in DOCTOR WHO ; a strong female character, broadly on the side of virtue, while the Glitz / Dibber partnership was rightly called (by The Daily telegraph no less) "Shakespearian" (probably in reference to the dialogue rather than the quality of the acting !).

One area of 'The Mysterious Planet' where everything was RIGHT from the word go was the relationship between the Doctor and Peri. Colin and Nicola were finally allowed to portray their characters as *people* who *liked* each other, who joked *with* rather than *at* each other, and who were chums—not simply fellow travellers. It was a joy to see Colin putting his arm around Nicola so often and to see them smiling at each other—such a relief from the constant whining, moaning and bickering that summarised their relationship throughout Season 22 !

Of the rest of the cast, Tony Selby as Glitz conveyed an elaborately multi-faceted (i.e. two-faced) character with obvious gusto, notably in his confrontations with Joan Simms who convincingly portrayed a tough, highly dangerous woman, although her battle cries were somewhat over the top !

Michael Jayston as the Valeyard was intriguing, with the underlying note of menace in his voice proving very sinister. However, he suffered from some very poor lines—especially the repetition of the word "suggest" at the close of episode 1. After a sluggish middle pair of episodes, episode 4 was partly lifted back up to the heights of part 1 due to the intensity of the verbal sparring match between the Valeyard and the Doctor. Only then did *real* passion creep in, and only then did the Trial seem a *genuine* threat to the Doctor's life (although it also served as a firing ground for typically Holmesian cracks against political censorship and censoring of violence—were you watching, Mrs.Whitehouse ?). But, if Michael Jayston just about overcame the limitations of a Saward-influenced script and a silly hat, Lynda Bellingham sank without trace beneath the most farcical headgear witnessed in the show since Patrick Troughton's. Her constant over-acted tensing of face muscles and irritating pursing of the lips at every outburst by the Doctor grew repetitive in the extreme, and surely an Inquisitor appointed by the High Council of the Time Lords would be given something more appropriate than a battered biro with which to make notes !

The rest of the cast were competant, with the exception of Glen Murphy who was terribly miscast as Dibber, and Billy McColl and Sion Tudor:Owen who, quite frankly, turned in atrocious performances of the criminally misinterpreted duo of Humker and Tandrell, for which director Nick Mallett must take responsibility for, although generally the direction seemed very competant . Cameras actually *moved* and shots were varied—an improvement on the rooted in concrete and static direction of Messrs.Roberts, Jones and Moffat—and the location footage was especially stunning and used to its full effect.

However, aspects of the direction which left a lot to be desired included the shots of the two robots—there were too many of them ! Ironically in a story which opened with the best model shot ever seen on British television, it was special effects which most 'effectively' let down the production values. L-1 was *just* tolerable, even though it was painfully obvious that the footage had been speeded up to conceal its real snailspace rate of advance. It seemed better on the surface, perhaps because of Nick Mallett's excellent use of point-of-view shots, but in the tunnels L-1 was about as menacing as the invalid cars its engines came from ! Drathro was an even bigger disappointment. Shots of him from the chest up seemed very impressive, but in long-shot he was abysmal. Palpably a man in a suit and ludicrously rigid in his movements, Drathro was all too similar to Marvin the Paranoid Android in HitchHikers and equally laughable. His flexible hands were only seen in a poor context when he stood in a corner twisting his palms aimlessly for all the world as if he were a demented break-dancer and the only half-way decent shot of him was when he exploded !

Another area where the story badly failed was the cliffhangers. While the endings of episodes 2 and 3 were just tolerable, part 1's finale let down an otherwise enjoyable episode. Did anyone watching even assume that with the Doctor on trial he was likely to face a fine for parking his Tardis on a double yellow line or be sentenced to proclaim three "Hail Rassilons" if he were found guilty ? As if this was not bad enough, EXACTLY the same cliffhanger followed at the end of epsidoe 4, with Nick Mallett again using the SAME angled close-up of Colin's face. Ho hum !

Costumes were also generally atrocious, with the single exception of Nicola's. Katryca's garb was dowdy, Glitz's was , well, too glitzy, the train guards' were drab and seedy and Mardeen's was cringe-inducing in the extreme, and it was never explained why Grell had a bottle of ketchup cracked over his helmet ! Ken Trew cannot, above all, be forgiven for the costumes of the Valeyard and the Inquisitor as the courtroom scenes are the centrepiece of the entire series.

To conclude, the story above all seemed to suffer from attempting to do too much; more than the budget would permit visually, and more in plot terms than the average viewer could be expected to follow. The script contained some wonderful gems and yet seemed unable to bear the weight of the overarching Trial sequences without postponing the resolution of all its own loose ends. It was not the quantum leap that SPEARHEAD FROM SPACE or even THE LEISURE HIVE were. After an 18 month gap it was not the dramatic improvement or clear classic we might have expected or , indeed , were promised by both Colin Baker and John Nathan-Turner. Still recognisably a JN-T production, and like many of his stories it had a scope of ambition matched only by the carelessness of the execution.

Above all, however, it STILL contained that special, undefinable magic which makes DOCTOR WHO unique and simply the best show on British television. God, it's good to have it back !

Reviewed by TIM COLLINS

READERS' VIEWS

SCOTT BENHAM: Not having been a great fan of a lot of the JN-T stories and knowing of Joan Simm's inclusion in the programme I did think that it would be the beginning of the end—but not so! Robert Holmes' script—what can I say ? The blend of drama and humour was excellent. The scene with Balazar informing the Doctor of the books was a classic example of Holmes' humour. The new theme music is quite good too . . . *ROGER SPENCE:* Episode one seemed remarkably good, especially after all the dark rumours shrowing the show of late. Seeing the familiar faces once more restored to their rightful slot on Saturday filled me with optimism. Nicola Bryant's performance has improved radically and her costume is at last a bit more sensible, although Colin's stupid outfit still pushes credibility slightly over the edge. The only criticism I have concerns the rather disjointed feel to the story caused by the rather brutal cutting between the action on the planet and the trial scene . . . *TIM MUNRO:* My reaction to episode 1 is one of cautious enthusiasm. There seems to have been a considerable improvement and the most noticeable change is Colin Baker who seems more subdued and credible. He's still overacting, but it's no longer annoying or intrusive and I found myself accepting him as the Doctor for the first time. Peri also seems to have improved and is more mature. She also looks a lot nicer now she's got a decent costume. The false bitching between them has also gone and their friendlier relationship is a great improvement. Only real complaint concerns the wishy-washy rendition of the theme tune (rather odd as Dominic Glynn's incidental music is rather wonderful !). I have a feeling it would have sounded better with a title sequence specially designed for it. As it is, the flashy titles don't really suit the slower and more mysterious theme . Time for slit-scan to return, I think. In all an impressive start to the season. I'm not sure whether it's due to the return of the 25 minute format or JN-T and Saward getting a much-needed boot up the backside, but I hope they can maintain the standard. JN-T may yet leave the show with a few shreds of credibility and my respect, but this must still be his last season though...*DAVID CARLILE:* Part 1 looked superb on the big screen at PanoptiCon , particularly the superb effects sequence at the beginning. On the whole it was a good episode and perhaps the current team can produce some wit (see D W B#35, pp.5), but it may be too soon to say that. The one really bad point about the episode was the new theme. I don't think I've ever heard such an insipid , wimpish piece of music. It could serve a function as background music in a supermarket, but as a theme tune it's a flop...*DINO GALASSI:* I'm not at all keen on the humour in the story and the cliffhangers weren't too impressive either, with part 4's being a virtual repeat of the first one ! Glitz and Dibber were an amusing pair and I look forward to the former's reappearance later on in the trial. Maybe then we'll find out who the 'sleepers' are and how the Earth managed to shift its position by a few light years ! for the violence being out, try telling that to Katryca and Broken Tooth !...*D.CLUCAS:* The opening sequence was indeed amazing, so good I must have watched it a dozen times. Even the initial encounter with the Valeyard proved promising, but from there to the middle of episode 4 we are subjected to the maximum amount of embarrassing rubbish that I have ever seen. In fact I found myself reading the newspaper during episode 2 ... *TIM GREAVES:* This story turned out to be something of a disappointment. The storyline was very weak and by episode 2 I had lost interest. The adventure was only carried through by the trial idea which worked very well, but the story on Ravalox itself didn't even compare with the weakest of Season 22's tales. Joan Simms, whose inclusion I had had serious doubts about , proved she can 'play it straight' very well, and in fact was one of the few actors who actually seemed to be taking the situation seriously... *ANDREW CALDWELL :* I felt wholly disappointed. The signature tune was a write-off, and it had none of the 'uumph' of the former and sounded like a demented elephant trying to hum Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in B flat. I was bored as nothing particularly exciting was happening. Okay, so the Earth is where it shouldn't be, the Doctor is threatened with termination. Great ideas, but it just didn't work. I get bigger kicks from watching The Clangers. . . *DAVID GUEST:* As the first strains of the new theme music tinkled through the TV set, I wondered if I'd tuned in to Andy Pandy by mistake ! Can this lily-livered, heavily watered-down version of the theme music containing no menace whatsoever be heralding the start of the 23rd Season ? Throughout the first episode my heart sank . The thing was as insubstantial as the new theme music, which in itself is a gross insult to the genius of Ron Grainer. A brilliant opening effect was ruined as the Tardis wobbled and 'Coco' stumbled out. From then, downhill. Can Robert Holmes really have written this claptrap ? I recognise numerous of his elements, certainly, but I can't believe he could have written such staggeringly awful 'witty' lines. It doesn't help , of course, with an actor in the title role who seems singularly unable to display any signs of acting ability. I did not like Colin Baker in the last season —I like him even less in this, with his performance which I rank as one of the very worst I have had the misfortune to witness. Thankfully Nicola Bryant has matured into her character of Peri and is quite stunning, but nobody else — on the strength of the first two episodes—is doing all that well and I'm still waiting for something to happen ! I hate to sound so bitterly critical of a series I have followed avidly since the early Troughton days, but so far the season is a pale shadow of its former self. What have the production team been doing during the break ? Surely nobody casually watching that first episode would have been interested enough to want to tune in to any more ? Let us hope the series does have some sort of future.

...continued

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BELOW ARE THE EDITOR'S OWN, PERSONAL OPINIONS:

* STAR RATING = 38 % *

SCRIPT .... *½

Sadly, not a very memorable departure for Robert Holmes, but this is attributable more to the careless direction and script-editing than to Holmes' script; full of the ingenuity and wit for which he will be remembered for but poorly interpreted to the screen. As for lines such as (the Doctor to Merdeen): "Oh, Merdeen , why don't you just push off and guard some trains, eh ?", surely Holmes couldn't possibly have been responsible for those ?

ORIGINALITY .... ***

OK, the Doctor has been on trial before, but this method of interlinking and overlapping of plots is a unique and inventive way of using up Season 23's diminished quota of episodes, so full marks for that. The action on Ravalox, however, seemed very reminiscent of Planet of the Apes and the 'Star Trek' episode The Menagerie.

DIRECTION .... *½

Some nice hand-held shots, extensive location shoot and the effective point of view images of the L-1 robot couldn't disguise the glaringly obvious fact that, on the whole , the direction was abysmal. There was no tension, the cliffhangers held no incentive to watch the following week's episode and in places the acting just fell apart ... I could go on but as JN-T was well aware of Nick Mallett's limited credentials as a director when appointing him, the blame lies entirely with him .

ACTING .... *

Poor direction leads to poor acting, but there are always a couple of performers in every story who are able to rise above slopiness. In 'The Mysterious Planet' there were none. All the actors displayed a severe lack of conviction in their roles , with some such as Tony Selby seemingly sending their characters up. Joan Simms was no more than adequate, and therefore totally unnecessary serving only to detract viewers' attention being easily recognisable as "that Carry On actress" and seemed half stoned most of the time. The actors playing Balazar, Glitz, Humber and Tandrell were more wooden than the trees in the forest and Colin Baker's persistent hamming is still with us 18 months later. He really does need a strong producer and forceful director before people soon grow bored of his bellowing ego. The only sign of forceful acting came from Michael Jayston who ironically had the worst lines of the story to battle through!

SETS .... **

I suppose the budget for the opening sequence had to come from somewhere, and apart from a fairly convincing Marble Arch Station set, the rest was merely card, polystyrene and, of course, compact disc cases !

COSTUMES .... /

And that's solely for Nicola's new costume ! Certainly the worst collection of costumes I have ever witnessed on the series, and it is difficult to believe they came from such a talented designer as Ken Trew who created the colourful TERROR OF THE AUTONS costumes over 15 years ago.

MONSTERS / ENEMIES .... **

Again, given better direction and perhaps darker lighting , Drathro could have been quite impressive. And surely, being a robot he should have remained motionless when not performing a function or did the person inside forget he was inside a robot costume ? The L-1 was also pretty dreadful, but of the humans Jayston gave a suitably malevolent rendition of the Valeyard.

SPECIAL EFFECTS .... *****

Naturally, the opening sequence was superlative, but superfluous at the same time. What was the point ? To convince people that the rest of the story would be up to the same standard ? As it was, the following studio scene which showed the Doctor stumbling out of a barely materialised and wobbly Tardis was probably enough to make any potentially hooked viewers confirmed A-Team watchers. Although the rest of the effects weren't up to scratch I'll give them full marks in recognition of the best ever piece of visual FX ever commissioned for a British science fiction show, let alone DOCTOR WHO.

MUSIC .... **

The main bone of contention with the new theme music is that it displays none of the atmosphere of the original and even to an extent the Peter Howell version. In fact it is incredibly weak and swamped by the gaudiness of the opening titles. The incidental music wasn't the masterpiece we were led to believe either and did anyone notice exactly the same 4-note ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN score used to symbolise the Doctor's surprise at discovering the titles and authors of the 'Books of Knowledge' ?

OVERALL STORY .... *

After 18 months, was it really worth the wait ? I could barely believe that what was being presented as DOCTOR WHO was the result of an intense rethinking of the show's format, a "new direction" and that it was (to quote Bill Cotton's press statement): "Better than ever." It was worse than anything from Season 22, almost sinking to the nadir of THE TWIN DILEMMA. OK, many people will harp on its few good points, but ask yourself is this genuinely the standard you expect of your favourite TV series—especially after such an endlessly long wait ?? The story itself can best be summed up in one sentence: The Doctor and cast running up and down Marble Arch Station escalator in search of a plot !

The sad thing is, from what is already known of the subsequent episodes this season , things can only get worse. . .